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The Games machine

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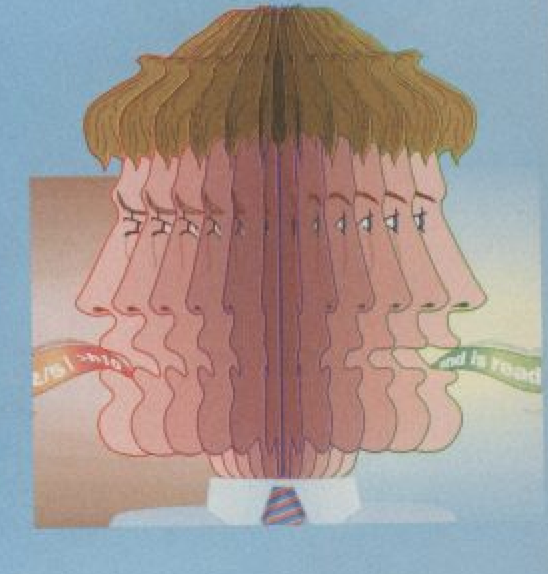
SCOOP PREVIEW!
THE KILLING GAME SHOW
Come on down with Psygnosis!


Pipe Mania!!
ADDICTION BEYOND BELIEF!!
C and VG Feb 1990 94%
Pipe Mania is "a classic puzzle arcade game that is so addictive, it should come with a Government Health Warning!"
Pipe Mania is a game of great ingenuity, simple in concept and friendishly challenging to play.
You'll need to act instinctively, but think strategically!
One wrong move, one brief hesitation or mis-placed pipe section, and you'll drown in a sea of slime!
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"Pipe Mania is a conceptually simple and cheeky game which is incredibly addictive"
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"Terrifically addictive... outlasts any arcade conversion"
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Pipe Mania
Zero March 1990 92%
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"A puzzle game of great ingenuity and addictivity, Pipe Mania is simple in concept, fiendishly challenging in play, and attractive to look at"
Zzap Sizzler
"Absolutely guaranteed to drive you round the bend"
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"Best PC strategy game of 1989"
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The Games machine





■ How can you take your game idea through to a finished product on the shelves? TGM speaks to the game designers who have made it - page 70.

IVANHOE...56

It's the first original game from Ocean France - can the continental chaps come up with the same quality of game as the British boys? TGM meddles with the medieval malarky.

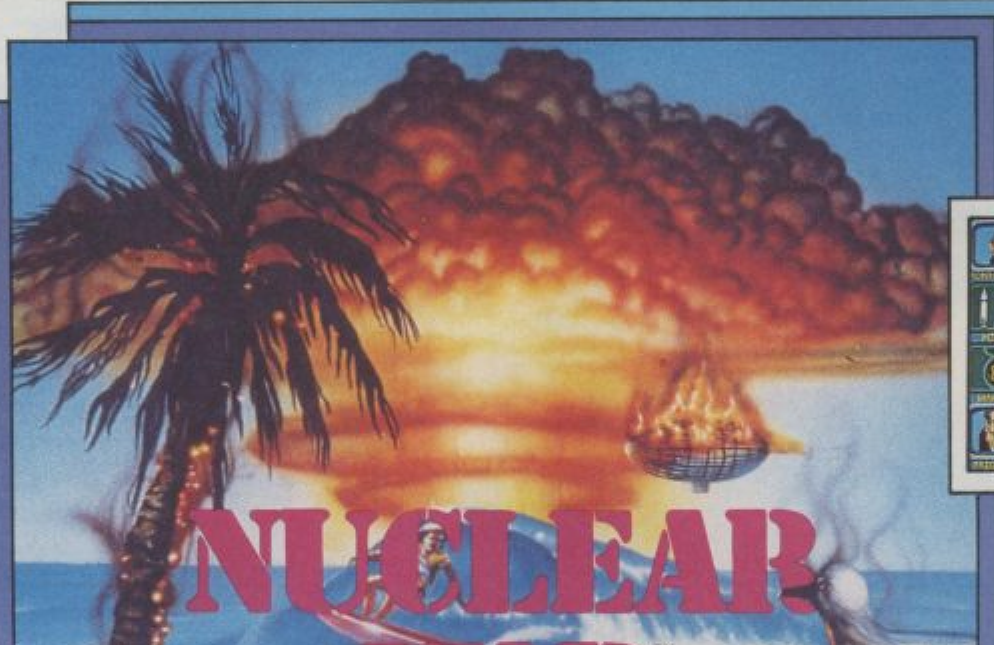
GAMES INDEX



■ The toughest, meanest, coin-ops on the circuit have been given the TGM treatment! Which means making them really easy so Mark Caswell can play 'em. Discover how he faired on page 63

DISCOVER NEW WORLDS WITH U.S. GOLD

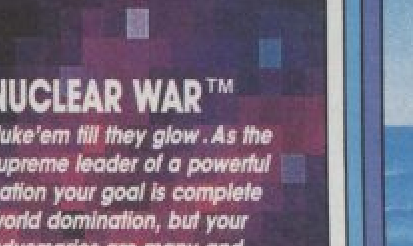
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Screen shots from various formats.

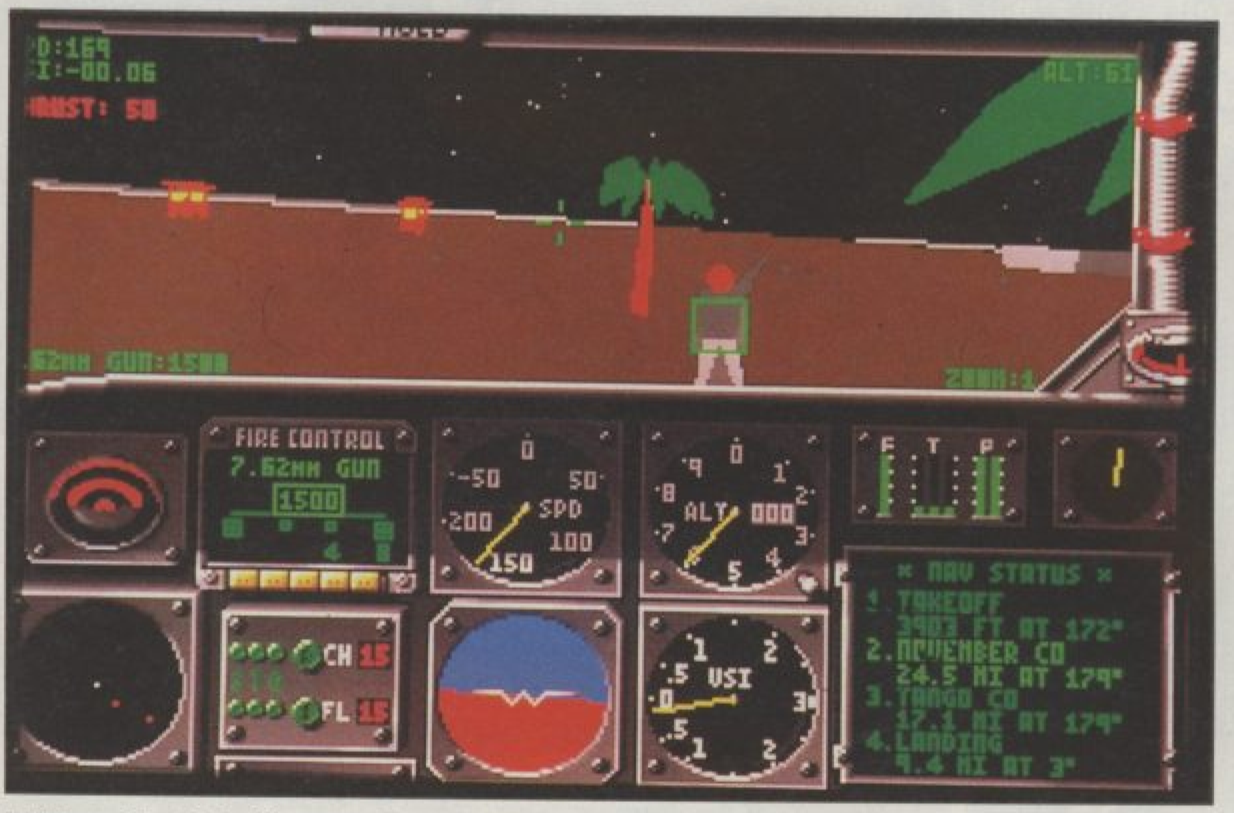
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BOOT-UP

IT AIN'T HEAVY



LHX, or Light Helicopter Experiment, is not a helicopter as such. It is a procurement programme initiated by the US Army to find a light attack helicopter for the future. Paul Rigby reveals more about the basis for some forthcoming games

Two competing designs have been drawn up to achieve the LHX contract. The first, known as the First Team, is backed by Sikorsky and Boeing. The second, known as the Super Team, includes Bell and McDonnell Douglas. No actual hardware has been produced besides one or two models and a batch of artist impressions.

It is from this background that Electronic Arts step in with their new flight simulation. Actually, EA's *LHX* not only simulates the LHX, but also includes the Apache, Blackhawk and the Osprey (a tilt-rotor aircraft).

Don't be fooled by the PR, EA have not gained access to any secrets, they have not planted agents in the Whitehouse, and the armed guards and closed-window shutters in EA's offices are just a ruse. What they have done is utilised a very successful and oft-used scientific process. It's called 'guesswork'.

Talking to author Brent Iverson, I asked him which design LHX follows: 'Well, we basically went after the McDonnell Douglas one because we thought that one looked cooler.' I can just see those army generals. 'To hell with the specifications! If it looks cool, we'll have it!'

Brent again: 'We faked everything. We assumed they are going to use current weapons, but slightly improved.' Actually Brent's admission that he had to make most of the details up is no big deal because the LHX is strictly a paper aeroplane. Even the respective manufacturers are not sure about the details so how are EA expected to know?

The general idea of the game is that you fly one of four helicopters in one of three trouble spots: East Germany, Vietnam or Libya. Within these areas there are missions to fly (escort, medevac, covert, etc). You can choose any chopper you think is appropriate for that mission. So for rescue or drop missions you'd be advised to use the Blackhawk or Osprey, for example. Adversaries are intelligent and vary from Hinds, Hokums (Soviet light attack choppers), SAMs, etc. There are 12 different missions but they are randomly structured in a similar way to MicroProse's *F-19*. So there will appear to be more than 12. Afterwards you'll receive medals and commissions if you're successful, including a debriefing.

'I wanted to create a game where there was a lot of action and it was not difficult to fly.' Even so, Brent has included different flight models for each helicopter, offering a realistic performance, yet without the complexity of control found on a detailed flight sim. In fact, after playing an early version of *LHX* I formed the impression that the game resembled a helicopter variant of EA's successful *Interceptor*. Excellent graphics, freedom of play, a variety of absorbing missions, easy to get into but with just enough realism in there to keep you interested. Watch out for a full review of the PC VGA version (with 256 colours) soon.

■ **Dynamix have just released Module Number One for A-10 Tank Killer (exclusively reviewed in February's TGM). The module introduces seven new missions which can be played as a full campaign. The disk comes with mission hints and an actual patch from the 23rd TFW 'Flying Tigers'. Stay tuned for news on availability.**

SIM CITY TERRAIN EDITOR

Taking full advantage of the success of Sim City, Maxis have produced a terrain editor allowing you to customise the game. Initially, Maxis intended to produce disks full of cities, however, with the editor they say you can 're-create cities from the past or present, copying the landform from maps.'

Basically, the program is divided into two sections: the random terrain generator and the tile by tile painting mode with a smoothing function. The former allows you to select the degree of randomness, via sliders. While the smoothing paint function gives a more realistic view to boundaries.

Most of the commands are iconic, although there are keyboard shortcuts. For example, click on Dirt and you can place bare earth tiles over objects. Channel sets a path that boats will follow in the water. There is also a Fill command which block-fills large areas with dirt, trees, etc.

In addition, you are able to modify the terrain of your existing cities. In this way you can add and remove a variety of objects, such as trees, water and so on. You can also change the gameplay level and the year of an existing city. While not an essential purchase, the Terrain Editor certainly opens up a number of possibilities.

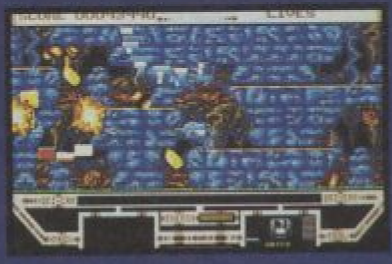
PAUL RIGBY

GOOD GAME,

Surprise, surprise! Oooh, I bet you thought it was going to be Brucey. Well, you're wrong, it's me. And we've gorra great show tonight. Yes, chucks, it's ever so, ever so good. There's a lorra, lorra fun to be had. Ooooh it's really, really great. And worra lorra laughs we'll have. But remember, do come back next week and tell us all about it... Joe King crossed the Mersey, side stepped Cilla, had brunch with the Boswells and made an appearance at Psygnosis. This is his tale.



■ Make sure you switch on to KGS tonight; the show that brings death to your door...



■ There'll be decapitations, mutilations, slayings - good wholesome family fun.



■ The Killing Game Show on the Amiga will be the next Psygnosis title. You're in the Hopper (the one-legged metal Kangaroo), the DOLL is rising, HALFs are attacking... time is not on your side.

It's incredible, it's unbelievable, it's absolutely sensational (quite remarkable too, Brian) - it's the hottest holo show of the century... it's the one, the only... Killing Game Show. And here's your host Cilla Black...

'Oooh hello chucks. Now I know you're all fed up with the same old boring holo progs. Of course you are, that's why you're here; tuned in to channel KGS to experience the thrills and spills of the deadliest show in the galaxy. And worra lorra excitement we've got tonight. In fact, every night. This is prime time satellite TV broadcast to you from the skies. Remember, luvs, KGS broadcast all night, every night - and it's the only game show where staying alive is half the prize. Also, the contestants come back every week and tell us how they got on. Or not, as the case may be. Oooh, it's really great.

'I'm ever so glad you could tune in to KGS, dearies - and I know you will too once you've experienced the Killing Game Show. With no expense spared we've constructed 16 (yes, go ahead, count them) special artificial Pits of Death - and they're located on our fun-packed satellite moons. They're up there right now floating through the big black beyond. But don't you worry about them, 'cos you're ever so safe down here. Those of you who still have windows (ooh aren't you old fashioned and quaint?) might want to take a look and see if you can glimpse them twinkling. It's dead pretty. Anyway, chucks, we must continue with the show...

'These Pits don't look nice close up. They're 'orrible. Each one has a huge hollow cylinder sunk into it. Listen, luvvies, don't worry about the technical details... each cylinder is populated by a number of dinky HALFs.

'Well surprise, surprise, a HALF is a Hostile Artificial Life Form. Oooh, but they'll do you no harm as they're miles away. Anyway, these creatures kill, and believe me they don't do anything by half. Ha, ha - sorry about that one, I just couldn't help myself. Along with the HALFs is the DOLL (Deadly-to-Organic-Life Liquid), which slowly fills the cylinder.

'Now let's go and meet the contestants. Oooh, you girls won't be disappointed. We've gorra lorra swoonies tonight. And fellas, don't go away 'cos tonight could be your lucky night...'

Well thank you for that Cilla... did anyone know what she was on about? Psygnosis' next title due for release any day...

'Ooooh chucks, I just forgot to say ta-ra...'

Gerroff, damn it! You've had your air time, now go away. Anyway, as I was saying, Psygnosis' next title will be the Killing Game Show. Effectively, you're at the bottom of a pit which slowly fills with DOLL (liquid that kills on contact). Vicious HALFs wander around the pit and will slice you in... erm, half if they spot you. You're enclosed in a Hopper (a steel kangaroo-style suit) and have a laser as a weapon. The hopper can climb walls and pick up other weapons.

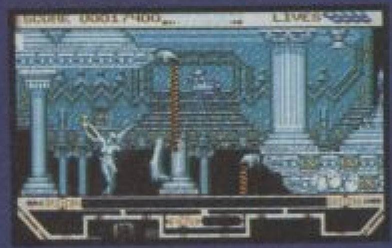
You start at the bottom of the Pit of Death on the first moon. There are eight moons or satellites in all, and each comprises two levels. You have one simple objective: escape alive.

As with all Psygnosis' titles, the graphics are absolutely astounding. Watch out for this stunner on an ST or Amiga near you soon. Oh, and remember: KGS is the only station that broadcasts all night, every night. Make sure you tune in tonight...

/panel/ BARBARIAN II About three years ago Psygnosis shocked game players with the



■ There's no time to admire the beautiful scenery. Just climb quickly because the river of death is flowing fast.



■ Hey, my pretty angel, what are you doing tonight? And who was the evil person that lopped one of your arms off?

,GOOD GAME



■ Help! I thought I lost the giant feet in Monty Python's Flying Circus show.

introduction of Barbarian. The hack'-em-up was arguably the first title to show the difference between 8- and 16-bit games. What is probably best remembered about the game is the excellent graphics and animation. Shortly, Psygnosis are to launch the follow up, Barbarian II.

From the looks of things the sequel is going to be faster and more playable than before. A lot more blood is promised.

Garvan Corbett, 28, is the artist responsible for designing the graphics and animation in Barbarian. He has been with Psygnosis for five years and has designed the graphics for Bratacus, Deep Space and much of Stryx. Garvan's forte is designing cartoon characters. He claims big feet and outline graphics are his hallmark. According to Nick, the Psygnosis game tester, Garvan also enjoys producing pencil drawings of large intimidating women with forked tongues. Unfortunately Garvan wasn't willing to show these off to TGM.

It's taken almost a year to get Barbarian II to its current level of sophistication. Garvan estimates there will be around 100 frames of animation for the main character alone.

Along with the hack and slay element, Barbarian II will feature a lot of hunting and searching. You'll be able to open chests and pick up extra weapons. It'll even be possible to lose your sword and engage in hand-to-hand combat. There will be more monsters to defeat and numerous levels to battle through.

From the pre-release pictures on this page, Barbarian II looks set to be a scorcher.



■ Check your look in the slime below, but don't get too close because it will dissolve you.



■ Slow down, there's a sharp corner up ahead.

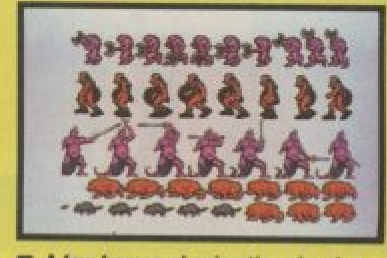
THERE'S MORE OVER HERE

Psygnosis have a a couple other products in the pipeline. Both are some way off, and the final game names have yet to be decided on. Provisionally the games are called Carthage and Matrix Marauders.

Carthage is mostly the brainchild of Psygnosis graphic artist, Jeff Bramfitt. For the past year Jeff has been concentrating on the game which is a mixture of strategy and chariot racing set in Roman times. The game was originally a new twist on arcade car games; rather than steering a car you'd have a chariot with several well-positioned spikes. The programmer got carried away with fractal graphics, so there's now a lot of strategy in it.

Matrix Marauders is an arcade strategy shoot-'em-up. The idea being to capture control points in groups of three before the enemy moves in.

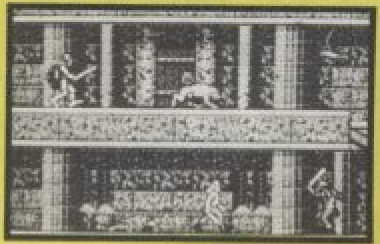
Some way off is a game called Matrix Marauders. Jim Bowers is doing some of the still images for the game. Although these images look video digitised, they're not. Jim spends hours shading and blending graphics to produce metallic-looking results.



■ A few frames of animation showing some enemy characters from Psygnosis' forthcoming Barbarian II.



■ Graphic artist Garvan Corbett won't disappoint his fans - the main character in Barbarian II will have very big feet.



■ A scene from the corridor section of Barbarian II. Decapitations will be commonplace.



■ Another scene from Barbarian II. This time from the forest. The game promises to be faster than before and have more depth.



TOLKIEN TALES

Roleplaying has been just-about-to-take-off in Britain for almost two years now. It's true that few people haven't heard of *The Bard's Tale* series, but how many have actually played one of them? And there's no limit to the choice of role you can play nowadays (from King Arthur to a thief), in fact, it seems everyone is now 'rolling their own'. Interplay, creators of the ubiquitous Bard, have taken a strange step and gone back to grab characters from the most famous adventure of all, Tolkien's *Hobbit*. Marshal M Rosenthal grabbed his magic ring and spoke to head programmer, Troy Miles

So what is all this *Lord of the Rings* business anyway? And when's it all going to end?

'First off,' says Miles, 'the game will be subtitled *Fellowship of the Ring*. That's because we're planning a trilogy. In this, the first one, you start as Frodo and are responsible for assembling a party (up to eight) and going off in search of the all-powerful Ring. Mini adventures dot the way towards the ultimate goal where _ without giving the ending away _ there is a climatic event which could spell doom to all Middle Earth. This is unlike the book which sort of ends on a quiet note.' (It's also interesting to note that in the book Bilbo actually gives Frodo the Ring, which, of course, Bilbo stumbled upon in *The Hobbit*. There's no actually quest for the Ring in the book! _ TGM Tolkien Expert.)

'The animation and visual effects occur in the large 'window on the world', wherein you look down upon the characters and landscape in a 3/4 view of shaded 3-D graphics. You control the leader of the party and can switch at any time to another member, using the mouse, joystick or keyboard. Going into a building 'removes' the top so you can look inside. Information appears in a window below, as does any interaction with characters. A separate Stat screen presents the current leader and ten control icons for doing various things, such as preparing a weapon for battle (it also shows the picture of the character as well as personal and weapon information).

'Using weapons requires the same skills and situations as in the real world. Eg: you must be up close to wield a sword effectively, although someone with a bow and arrow can fire from a greater distance.'

Miles points out that Tolkien wasn't big on magic (even though the Ring was full of magical capabilities _ TGM Tolkien Expert). 'But we've added that to the mix by providing spells for the magician to use, plus Words of Power. These are special words which cause unique things to occur, depending on where you are and when you say them.

'Our wanting to create a realistic fantasy world precluded us using digitised images, so don't expect any of that. We do make extensive use of sound though, using the same sampling routines found in our *Battlechess*. We also push the C64 SID chip for all its worth.

'Our biggest objective,' concludes Miles, 'is to give Tolkien fans a run for their money without alienating those who've heard of, but never read, the books. We're creating seven large map areas — each some 1000x1000 cells large — and filling them not just with those areas expected but also places only hinted at or mentioned by Tolkien, which includes characters as well. We're also randomizing elements in the game to keep the player off-guard, even if he's very familiar with the storyline. Since each map can only be accessed from another in specific areas, players should plan on taking a long time to get through it all. After all, hobbits don't move that fast.'

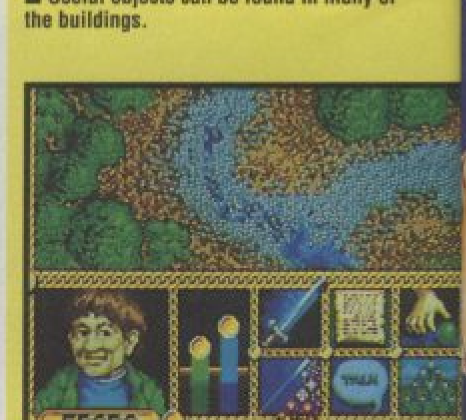
You can catch *Lord of the Rings — Fellowship of the Ring* on the PC and C64 this summer. The concluding volumes, *The Two Towers* and *Return of the King*, should follow in 1991.



■ A screen from the C64 version. Here Frodo is seen wandering around the vast wilderness that makes up middle earth.



■ Useful objects can be found in many of the buildings.



■ PC owners with EGA graphics boards are in for a real treat with graphics like these.

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BATMAN THE CAPED CRUSADER

"Believe me this is brilliant, a finely-honed arcade adventure which is the best comic licence ever – you'd be batty to miss it." CRASH SMASH.

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DOUBLE DRAGON

"Skilful programming has taken the superb graphics and addictive game play of the monster arcade hit and faithfully reproduced it on the home computer."



R-TYPE

"Here at S.U. we think it's about as close to an ultimate space blast as anyone will ever get. Fab." SINCLAIR USER.

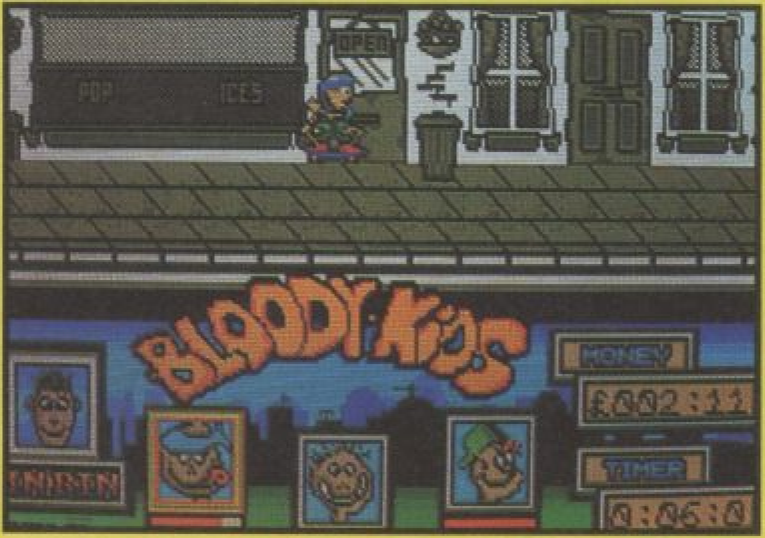
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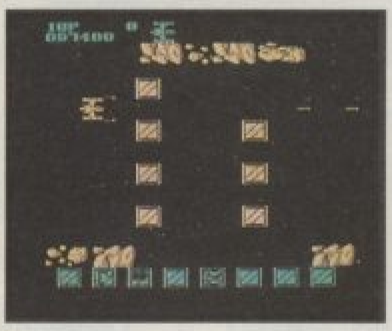
BLOODY KIDS

Ooo crikes! It's those *Bloody Kids* — stars of the riotously funny cartoon strip appearing in Skateboard magazine. The troublesome trio are skating their way into the budget market cheers to Smash 16 and Players Premier.

***Around Town With Those Bloody Kids* is based on the very first strip, created by Skate Muties Bear and Beano, in which the three crazy pranksters attempt to con a few tickets for the Sonic Youth concert from an agent. The agent sees through the prank, but reckons if the kids stick up 500 posters he'll give 'em the tickets. So, off they whizz on their skateboards through a skating assault course and on into town sticking up the posters and providing a mirth-inducing helping hand with other jobs. Check it out at the end of May — £4.99 for 16-bits and £2.99 for 8-bits.**

DELTA CHARGE!

Blasting onto the Speccy right now is Thalamus's latest space action shoot-'em-up *Delta Charge*. Converted from the original C64 game *Delta*, *Delta Charge* is a wild horizontal scroller. The idea is simple: knock anything that comes your way. Collect an assortment of weapons, including the bizarre fish weapon, and head into the vicious regions of uncharted space like the Jelly of Dreams (!). Flippin' crazy or what?



TIME SOLDIER

Spring has most definitely sprung — you can tell the gambling lambs are hogging the limelight at the casino. Also springing up this month is a new software house: Electrocoin Software. Don't be surprised if the name sounds familiar; Electrocoin are leading suppliers of arcade machines to the UK. So it's hardly surprising that the first game is a conversion of SNK's smashing shoot-'em-up *Time Soldier*.

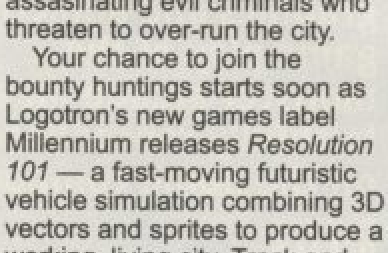
You must trek through six eras of Earth's history to find five of your commando companions - who have been strewn throughout time and space - by the evil galaxy conqueror Gylend.

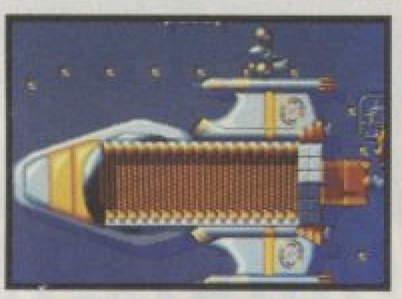
You'll find yourself fighting cavemen and dinosaurs in prehistoric times, duelling with ninjas and sea monsters in medieval Japan, up against the last weaponry in World War III and having the fright of your life in a future world. *Time Soldiers* will be out on the Commodore 64, Atari ST and Amiga in April.

RESOLUTION 101

What happens to minor criminals in the future? Do they do community service like weeding OAPs gardens? Do they hell! Since the passing of Resolution 101, they're offered a chance to regain their freedom by becoming bounty hunters. Liberty is gained by assasinating evil criminals who threaten to over-run the city.

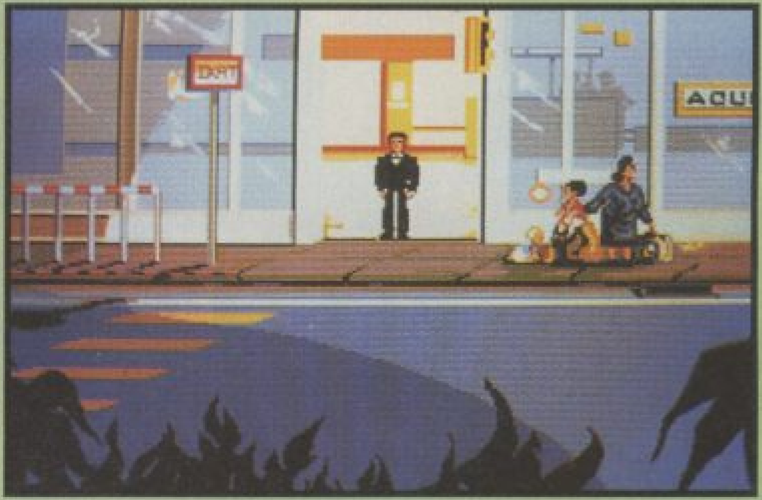
Your chance to join the bounty huntings starts soon as Logotron's new games label Millennium releases *Resolution 101* — a fast-moving futuristic vehicle simulation combining 3D vectors and sprites to produce a working, living city. Track and eliminate your adversaries, loot and savage the wreckage of their crafts, buy your way to freedom. Out soon on the Atari ST, Amiga and PC.





PARADROID 90

***Paradroid* — it's the game that shook the Commodore world four years ago. Hewson are now creating a super deluxe version for the Atari ST and Amiga called *Paradroid 90*. The droid crew of a galactic space freighter have turned against their masters. A droid Influence Device has been beamed aboard; you must use it to destroy the mutinous crew. Explore the five different space stations suspended in the galactic starfield and avoid pirates who are out to destroy you. *Paradroid 90* is being programmed by the creator of the original, +Andrew Braybrook, and is due for release in the summer.**



OPERATION STEALTH

It's a bloomin' hard life when you're a secret agent. Just look at that Bond chappie: rushing around the world, overthrowing drug-crazed psychotic dictators and indulging in heaps of rumpo with scantily-clad females! If it sounds like the life for you, get out and check *Operation Stealth* where all that spy malarky is happening. It's the new game from Delphine Software, out in May, and is the sequel to the impressive Future Wars.

You play the part of John Glames, CIA agent, investigating the disappearance of a top-secret Stealth bomber from the US air force. The bomber is believed to be hidden in Paragua where the country's leader, General Manigua, has gone from being a benign and respected leader to a, wait for it... drug-crazed psychotic dictator!

And what is the involvement of the shadowy crime syndicate Spyder? Who knows? Well, no-one. So grab your case of remarkable gadgets and pop off and solve everything. The only clue we're giving is that you can get hold of *Operation Stealth* soon on the Amiga and Atari ST, price £24.99



DYNASTY WARS

Second century China was the place to be if you wanted a scrap with a bunch of rebellious warlords. Y'see they're in a punch-up situation with the overthrown Han Dynasty. As luck would have it, out of the fallen Dynasty come four courageous warriors who are determined to put the rebels back in their place.

And that's what US Gold's latest conversion of the Capcom coin-op *Dynasty Wars* is all about. Each of the four warriors have different skills and powers. Each has a horse on which to enter into battle. With simultaneous two-player action and eight challenging battle scenarios, *Dynasty Wars* sounds a bit of a hoot, eh *Willow Pattern* fans?

SHADOW WARRIOR

Look out — there's a ninja about! Popping up this time in Ocean's latest whizzo conversion of the Techmo arcade machine Shadow Warrior. Travel the streets of modern day New York bashing the living daylights out of seemingly endless gangs of evil ninjas. 'It's a shoot-'em-up with shoes!' proclaims Shadow Warrior programmer Mike Talbot of Teque.

It's the graphics which are the main attraction in Shadow Warriors. There are two megabytes in the original coin-op; Teque are hoping to cram as much as possible into the computer conversion. Out for an Easter release from Ocean on all major formats.

ORIENTAL GAMES

Hiiiija! Berlimey! It's a ninja, and it's looks like he's off to the Oriental Games. Indeed he is — it's a martial arts fighting game from Microstyle featuring three beat 'em up styles: kung fu, kendo and freestyle.

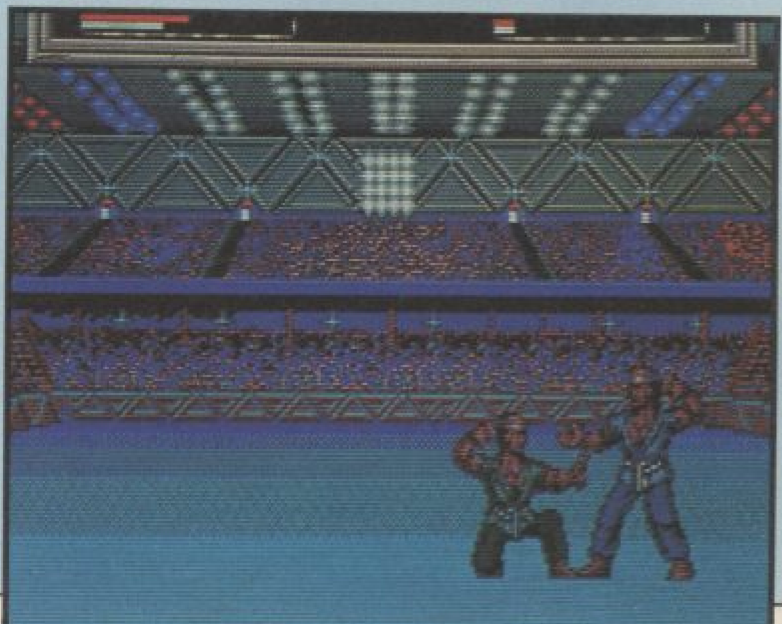
'But', exclaims the nation, 'we've had enough ninja games!'.

It's just as well, then, that the programmers have come up with something a tad innovative. It's all to do with the control method. You can create the moves though a joystick editor by preprogramming each directional push with a special move, or heap together a load of actions which are triggered by one joystick movement. For example, with one directional thrust your player could perform a high kick followed by a forward flick to get behind his opponent, turn around and then deliver a brain-busting roundhouse kick to the back of the head! Try that in Exploding Fist and leave your joystick unmangled!

This preprogramming element allows greater strategy to be used when playing the game against the 28 different challengers. And as each opponent uses a unique combination of moves, you need all the help you can get.

Though Oriental Games was developed for the 16-bit machines, MicroStyle are releasing 8-bit versions. Sadly, though, there isn't a joystick editor in the 8-bit game. Awww. Making up for that — there's an additional event included: fat-slappin'... err, sumo wrestling!

Turn to page 20 and try your hands and feet at the Oriental Games competition.

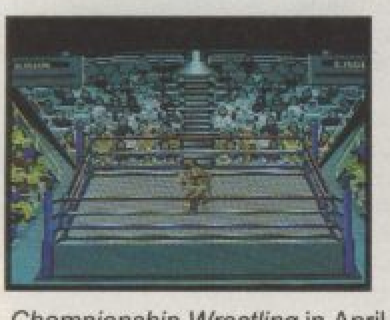


SNIBBLY DIPPETS

- Thalamus have signed up their first licence. The Ford Rally team have put their seal of approval on the game which features high-speed vector-filled graphics running at a nifty 50 frames a second. Preview soon...
- All-Time Favourites is a new compilation from US software house Accolade. ST and Amiga owners get Test Drive, Mean 18, Famous Courses Volumes I and II, and Hardball all in one pack for £29.99. Meanwhile PC and C64 disk owners get Mini-Putt, Apollo 18, Hardball, and Test Drive in their packs. £29.99 for PC peeps and a tenner cheaper for C64 chaps.
- Bargain news, ahoy! The high price of console software is often one of the reasons that's off putting to a prospective console buyer. This is why Virgin/Mastertronic, distributors of Sega software, have reduced the price on a selected range of Master System product to under a tenner. For £9.99 each you'll be able to get Enduro Racer, Ninja, Rescue Mission, Super Tennis, Teddy Boy and Transbot. And for £12.99 each there's Action Fighter, Aztec Adventure, Fantasy Zone, Global Defence, Secret Command and World Grand Prix.
- Encore kicks off it's cheapo 16-bit range with Battleships, Ikari Warriors and Beyond The Ice Palace all coming in at £9.99. Originally released on the Elite label at double the price, ST and Amiga owners are in for a treat. Battleships is out at the end of April, with Ikari and Ice Palace entering the shops in early May.
- Avoid that spaghetti computer look with Spectravideo's new IR Infrared joystick — goodbye jumbles of wires! The joystick is supplied with a control box to plug in the back of the computer. Infrared signals sent from the stick are picked up by the control box. Operating with a range of 30 feet, the IR is out in April costing £39.95.
- The Unofficial Guide To The Best Games is a forthcoming book from Grove Press (01-485 6010) and details some of the best games available for the ST, Amiga and PC. Retailing at £2.95 it's a bit steep, but you are provided with a £5 money-off voucher for any Microprose, Rainbird or Firebird product.

INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING

Get yer Granny on the Amiga! As everyone knows Grannies are the leading experts on the rough and tumble sport of wrestling. They yell at the screen! They wave their brollies in the air! They clout the bad 'un that's doin' the dirty on the little one with their handbags! Fun packed family entertainment indeed. And it's all being faithfully recreated by Hewson who are releasing *International*



Championship Wrestling in April for the walloping price of £24.99!



F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER

If you reckon waiting for a number 73 bus is a long, arduous process, you've no idea what 16-bit flight fanatics have been going through for over a year. Now, 14 months after the PC version, Microprose's *F-19 Stealth Fighter* is just about ready for release on the ST and Amiga.

A covert, low-profile operation is the name of the game with you talking control of the near radar-invisible fighter. Zooming into enemy territory, taking out targets and making it back safely takes skill and courage. Progress is hard — but one day you might just make the grade to take on the ultimate-risk Central Europe scenarios.

COMPUTER ARENA 90

Since 1988 there has been a regular event held in foreign climbs called Computer Arena. It's not a flashy show, it's not an international trade show — but a conference where leading lights from the European software industry spend a weekend discussing and deciding where it's all going. This year everyone who's anyone flew to Malta for the four day event held between the 15th and 19th of March. Dim light RICHARD EDDY was one of the delegates.

Thursday 15 March Heathrow Airport departure lounge, 10.00pm: Board Air Malta plane, dreading the thought of three and a half hours in flight. Pam from Ocean sits beside me, hands me Liverpool FC screen shots for the football special (see page 45) and proceeds with a three and a half hour impersonation of Frank Sidebottom. Arrive Malta 2.30am dead tired. 3.30 am — enter bedroom, discover small cockroach and give it a friendly poke with rolled up copy of TGM, go to bed.

Friday 16 March Malta Hilton, lunchtime-ish: Throw dead cockroach out the window and head off for conference number one. The speeches kick off with Activision boss Rod Cousens summarising the software industry in 20 minutes. Talks at a rate of knots, slides appear and disappear in seconds. Everyone requests a transcript of the speech to read later as there's only so much a brain can cope with.

Bob Hay of the Federation Against Software Theft (FAST) speaks next with very promising news. The anti-piracy campaign which has been running for the last six months has had a good effect, resulting in many pirating organisations being uncovered and busted. FAST now has additional staff and, with more support coming from software trade body ELSPA, is looking to recruit another member of staff to concentrate on games software piracy. Currently most of FAST's work is devoted to the business sector. Bob announced the launch of a new anti-piracy advertising campaign which you can be sure TGM is supporting.

Next came a topical debate — Alan Miles of MGT, creators of the latest British computer the SAM Coupe - on A Lingering Death of the 8-bit?. He made the point that too much emphasis is currently being put on new technology; the ever expanding 16— and 32—bit power market. He wonders if things are really getting better with the advent of more powerful computers because hardware and software costs are getting higher. Alan stated that rather than producing an expensive 32-bit machine, which would be a machine of the future and beyond anyone's price point, their intention with the SAM Coupe was a development of 8-bit technology — making an 8-bit micros look and sound the same as a 16-bit. Effectively producing a computer for today's users at an affordable price. Well, the debate raged on... but what do you reckon — the letters pages are open to your views.

Saturday March 17: Going to the nightclub was a mistake. Blame industry chums for dragging me there against my wishes and forcing refreshments upon me. Honest. Amongst today's topics was exhibitions, software mail order companies and consoles in a speech made by Nick Alexander of Virgin/Mastertronic who distribute the Sega Master System and soon the Mega Drive. With already 210,000 Master Systems in the UK, it's



■ Your man on the case, Richard Eddy (left) and Steve Merrett from Amiga Action checking out the local talent, erm... Make that — deliberating the effects of 1992 on the 16-bit market. Ahem.

now boom time for the consoles. Nick expects that by the end of the year there'll be 750,000 Master Systems across Europe and 100,000 Mega Drives.

The other major speech was an update on the trade organisation ELSPA, which stands for the European Leisure Software Publishers Association. Formed at last year's Arena it was set up to promote and help the software industry. The main point this year was about the software charts, compiled by Gallup. Some people feel there is a problem at the moment with the way charts are put together and not accurately portraying what's selling. ELSPA are keen to improve the system so that everyone, including the magazines, can make the most of them. Of course this will cost money, but if everything goes to plan, we could see some exciting developments coming through. Saturday night at Arena means Gala dinner — the only time in the year where the software industry looks smart, discarding jeans and day-glo t-shirts for dinner jackets and black ties. It was a riot with TGM writer Mel Croucher and Dominic and Mark of Domark providing the entertainment. And then (Oh! The hardship of it all) off to the nightclub for some more serious discussion. Ahem!

Sunday 18 March: 5.30am is not a suitable time to return from a nightclub when one has to be in conference four hours later listening to David Pleasance of Commodore talking about where the 64 and Amiga are going. And, as you'll be pleased to know, they're both doing very well. Especially in the leisure market shown by the fact that the Amiga Batman pack far outsold the Amiga educational pack at Christmas. And apart from another raging debate about that QED programme and getting a software show on the TV that about rapped it up for the Arena conferences. It's all happening again next year — but until then let's go poolside...


'HOLY MOLEY.. THE HERO OF THE 80's IS BACK.!
IMPOSSAMOLE™
Monty's escapades have given him an island in the sun and more money than even a moleannaire could ever spend. Chosen by aliens to vanquish the Five Guardians Monty is now given Superpowers. Follow his latest adventures as he threatens to destroy all, including himself.
AH BLISSZZZZ – THUD – WHAT WAS THAT?
HELP! – AN ATTACK BY GIANT COCONUTS.
NO! – CAPTURED BY SOME ALIEN "THINGIES".
HAT'S THIS – A GIANT MOLETRAP – ZZAP!!
CHANGED BY ALIENS INTO IMPOSSAMOLE.
READY FOR ANY MISSION – NEARLY.
GERRRONAMOLE!!
CLICK
Available on:
CBM AMIGA,
ATARI ST,
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SPECTRUM
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GREMLIN
All mail order enquiries to: Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd., Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS. Telephone: (0742) 753423.

CAPSTONE CAPERS

It's always an exciting time when a new software company is announced. Who are they? What are they doing? And, more importantly, how are they going to impress us with their new ideas? Marshal M Rosenthal trekked three time zones to visit Capstone, part of the gigantic Intracorp conglomerate, and discovered two innovative licences...

Tom Clancy's latest novel, *Cardinal of the Kremlin*, has already topped the best-sellers list and looks set to become one of his most successful books to date. So successful that, like *Hunt for Red October* and *Red Storm Rising*, it too is being transformed into a computer game.

And if history is anything to go by, we could soon be seeing a film tie-in (*Hunt for Red October* is currently in post-production at Paramount, with Sean Connery in the lead role) and even a boardgame (*Red Storm Rising* is selling well as a TSR tabletop).

His books bring together high-tech and high adventure. Few other authors can convey to the average reader the myriad of weapons, terms, situations and battle stations that the modern armies of the world use to communicate and fight with. And that includes the East as well as West.

Cardinal of the Kremlin deals with the moot point of SDI, or Star Wars as it has (affectionately) become known. Regardless of whether you believe in killer satellites and lasers that can fire at them and deflect off to destroy enemy bases, it makes for a good yarn.

And one that Capstone Programming Services have picked up on and exploited to the max. David Turner is the director of the newly-formed company...

'Our version of *Cardinal* is based on creating a SDI program from scratch, while frustrating the Russians in their attempt to do the same,' he begins.

'On the technical end, we're completing the programming on IBM systems [Amiga version to follow] — which will give 256 colours in VGA, on down to monochrome. We also make use of digitised sounds, using the Real Sound system designed by Access systems, as well as the specialised Ad-Lib board [with 20 minutes of original music].'

The game is totally devoted to action/strategy. The main screen is composed of the American side (which you play) and the Russian (computer AI). Using icons, you choose the scientists who will develop your SDI program, implement policy, set security and plan espionage.

Keep in mind that the more the security, the less chance of a Russian mole getting information. However, the work will progress at a much slower rate, due to the restrictive atmosphere.

Turner points out the each scientist (male and female) comes complete with their own dossier, including digitised photograph: 'The effects of different people change each time so the game stays fresh and unexpected every time.' The average completion time is over two hours.

While a project is in the development stages, it's best to continually test the equipment and ensure it works! The best target to blow up is a drone satellite. 'We're trying to get digitised images of these in as well,' enthuses Turner. Meanwhile the Russians continue on their path to thwart the Americans and rush their own systems into completion.

'Then it might be time to bring up your ally, the Archer — who is readying his forces in Afghanistan, where the Russian SDI base is located. You won't see him until you order a raid on the base, but you've got to keep him in supplies and informed until that point.'

One of the icons brings up the Presidential Review — which not only shows how you're doing, but also the status in the Kremlin (or at least whatever your informers have found out).

'What's most important is that the game really relies heavily on the arcade sequences. Thinking is important, but *doing* counts for a lot.' Violence? 'Limited and not gory to commit in the name of National Defense. But fast reflexes are as important as making quick decisions.'

Though *Cardinal of the Kremlin* may not surprise too many people — we've all seen strategy games before — Capstone's other release is sure to raise a few eyebrows.



■ They're wild, they're wacky, they're zany, they're the hip and cool Bill and Ted two stars from a forthcoming game from Capstone. Can you guide these two to the top of the hit parade?

BILL AND TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

It's zany, wild, nuts and radically camp. It's a movie about two average dudes at a Californian high school. Their names? Bill and Ted. Their world? Sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. Well, the rock 'n' roll bit's true. For Bill and Ted have formed a rock group, with which they hope to influence the world. And their dreams may well come truer than they could possibly imagine...

Rufus, this hip cat from hundreds of years in the future, comes back to help the boys for all of civilisation is to be patterned by the music they'll create. One problem though, if they flunk history they won't graduate and their career will be over. So Rufus builds a time machine which will help them travel back in time.

Without giving too much away (the film and video have already been released in the States), the guys figure it would be quite a wheeze to bring back some of the dead dudes to impress the teachers. You can imagine the complications this creates.

With so many filmic steps forward and back in time, the game will have to be pretty accurate to be a successful translation. 'Absolutely,' he says, 'it'll have digitised pictures directly from the film as 'bridges' between scenes, and the actual voices of our heroes will be sampled.

'We've also added a few twists besides animated graphics. For one thing, even though Rufus provides a telephone directory [for time eras], not every number is valid.

'Not every person found can be brought back. Firstly, because only two others can be shuttled back to the telephone booth [and left in the nearby shopping mall], and second because some of these guys want you to get some object for them before they'll cooperate. So you have to go hopping all over time.'

Provided you get enough of these dudes back, there's still the task of rounding them all up from the mall and herding them over to the school.

'Whatever violence found is cartoon-like,' says Turner. 'Plus we're randomizing as much as possible, to keep the game fresh and fun, and one that can be finished successfully in one or two hours.'

The major questions still in development are twofold: will the player control both Bill and Ted together as a unit or separately, and will we get a chance to hear any of their hideous WLYD Stallion rock 'n' roll?

Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure is currently touring the top cinema screens, and the game will probably follow in June.

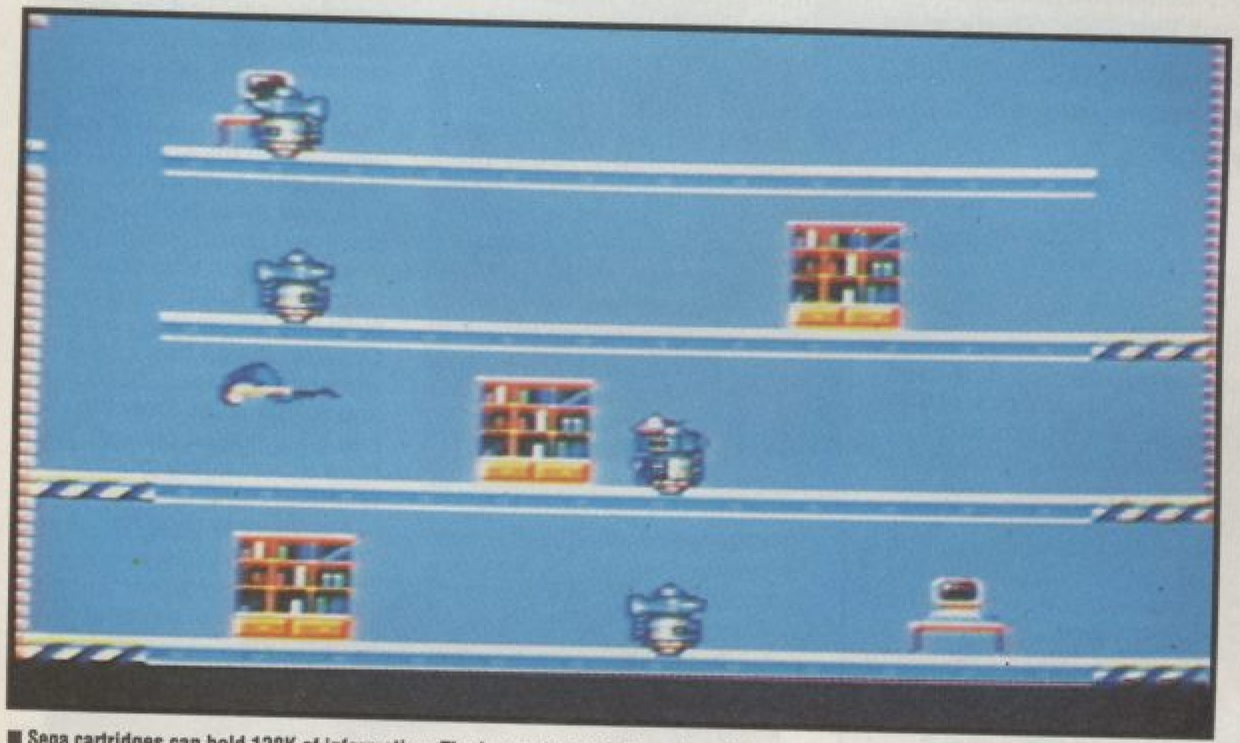
GREAT WIZARD IS ABOUT TO DIE

GAUNTLET 7800

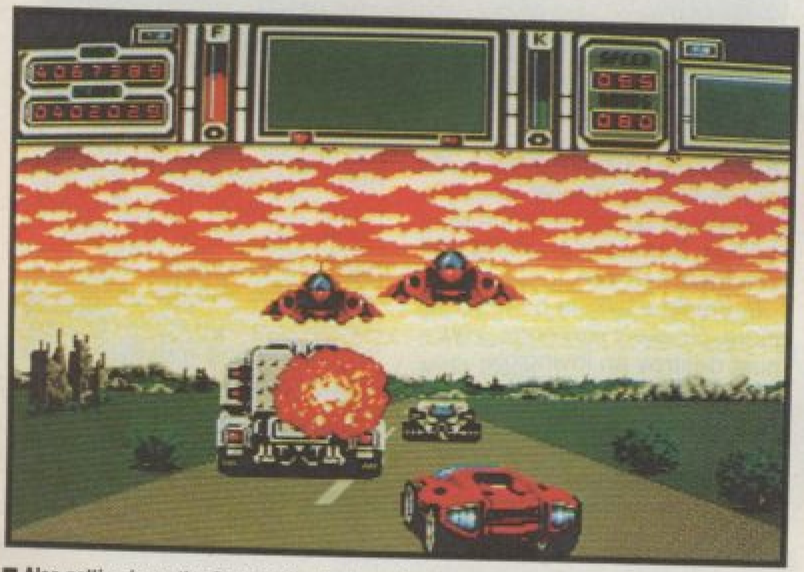
Bob Armour, just one of US Gold's in-house programmers, is finishing work on an Atari 7800 console version of Gauntlet. Bob has already written a 7800 game called Tower Toppler. You're probably more familiar with the UK computer game name: Nebulus.

Although Tower Toppler hasn't appeared in this country — due, presumably, to the fact that the 7800 hasn't been marketed particularly well over here — there are around two million consoles in the States and demand for games is great.

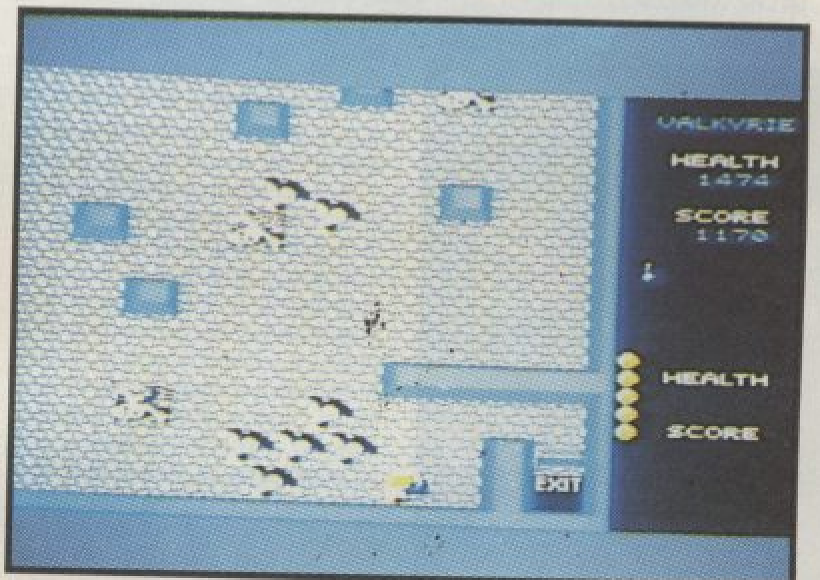
Bob's 7800 development kit comprises of a Mega ST running Atari's proprietary combination 6502/68000 assembler, lead from ST to 7800 RAM cartridge, and downloading software. While the system doesn't have any bells and whistles, it is reliable and features everything necessary for development.



■ Sega cartridges can hold 128K of information. The Impossible Mission code will be about 16K in length, the graphics a further 60 or 70K and the sampled sound another 20K



■ Also getting in on the Sega action is French software house Titus with Fire And Forget II — a mean road blasting game, coming your way soon!



■ Merlin the Wizard goes it alone in US Gold's forthcoming conversion of Gauntlet for the Sega Master System



■ Gauntlet on the Sega. A great coin-op conversion featuring simultaneous two-player action, over 100 levels and digitised sound. No matter what's on the screen in Gauntlet, the characters don't flicker and the gameplay stays fluid

Smashing onto a Sega 8-bit console near you very soon is US Gold's stunning conversion of Gauntlet. What! Four years after the game has been out on all other machines? 'Fraid so.

Gauntlet is among several classic titles being converted for the Sega by the Birmingham-based software conglomerate over the next few months. Impossible Mission, Paperboy and Indiana Jones are among the other games promised.

Gauntlet on the Sega looks set to blow away all other 8-bit versions of the game. The scrolling is fantastically smooth; it makes the ST's scroll look sick. Even in simultaneous two-player mode, when there are countless enemy monsters on screen, there is no apparent reduction in game speed. Stay a while... stay forever! Unforgettable words from an unforgettable game. A game you are about to see and hear very shortly if you've got a Sega Master System. US Gold have got in-house programmer Gary Priest converting the classic Impossible Mission onto Sega format. According to Gary, the gameplay will be very similar to theComm-odore 64 version: 'I don't want to change the game too much as the original was liked by everyone.' Naturally Impossible Mission on the Sega will boast improved graphics and more colour.

TOYS 'R' US

One month it's the Consumer Electronics Show, the next New York's International Toy Fair. There's no rest for Marshal M Rosenthal as he treks across America to bring all the news from America's latest home entertainment convention...

You may think that the recent Earl's Court Toy Fair in London was the biggest thing since the Barbie doll, but this ain't true. The real action men amongst you should be seen hanging out in Manhattan, New York. For it is here, in the towering Toy Centre, that the world's toy traders get together to play games and make money.

Just getting from one floor to the next is an adventure even Indiana Jones would back off from. But the rewards can be great, because there's some amazing stuff to be found. So let's think Tonka Truck and plough into the heaving masses to see what can be picked up in the next few months.



■ It's the Sound FX, and is the hip and happenin' 'thing' for young Americans. Strap it to your wrist and annoy everyone with irritating white noise! Hope it doesn't catch on...

CHIPS WITH EVERYTHING

It's all microchips nowadays. And the single most useful chip has to be that of sound. Progress through the end of the Eighties and into the Nineties has been impressive, with the single-channel beepers and false robotic voices being positively flattened by the butch *Op Wolf* voices and their built-in polyphonic synths.

Tiger Electronics have taken this to the max, with a long line of LCD hand-helds ($15), featuring great sound and multi-level action. There's *Ninja Gaiden*, *Double Dragon II: The Revenge*, *Altered Beast* and many more. The pick of the bunch, though, has to be *Batman* (better late than never). Fight through four levels of action. Each is overrun by seven vicious enemies, with special bat-weapons and, of course, an appearance by the Joker himself.

Also catching the (strained) eye is *American Gladiators*. This syndicated US television show (soon to become a national event) combines the best, if you can call it that, of wrestling and music videos. All this is linked together with bizarre contests as teams of players vie for glory.

New also (or perhaps reincarnated) are the LCD videogame watches (complete with alarm and time functions!!). One handy addition, missing from most of the popular earlier ones, is a sound control button. Available wristtops (sic) are: *Ninja Gaiden*, *Batman*, *Double Dragon*, *Simon's Quest (Castlevania II)*, *RoboCop*, and *Wrestlemania Challenge*. The *Dick Tracy* watch (of the film) is also in production. Be ready to see every imaginable item based around *Dick* in a few months, from Nintendo and Sega games to posters and plastic mugs.

TIGER TALK

Which brings us to Tiger's new talking hand-helds, Game Talk ($25). Each of the four games feature an incredibly life-like synthesized voice that guides the player through each phase, offering advice and warnings. The new titles include two sports games; *Sugar Ray Leonard's Talking Boxing* and *All-star Baseball*.

On to maze games and there's the sequel to one of the most popular games of this genre, *Ninja Gaiden II*. It



contains 20 different stages, ten scenes and 15 special tokens. The tokens supply a range of abilities, from simple power-ups to extra fire power.

In the final talking hand-held game, *Snake's Revenge*, you must destroy an invincible nuclear tank and save the world.

Tiger continue to pounce. Remember their two-foot-plus *Out Run* and *Afterburner* we featured last year (each the shape of the arcade game, complete with working steering wheel/joystick and gear/speed controls)? Well, now prepare to drive the *Batmobile* ($39)! Tiger's placing a LCD driving game within the shell of a true replica of the vehicle.

At over three feet long, dark, black and plastic, this is bound to satisfy those who couldn't raise the £16,000 you'd need to build one for yourself. Similar to *Out Run*, it also has a steering wheel (Bat-shaped, of course) and a gear lever. Only the shell has been built at present. You'll have to wait a few months before you can actually 'drive' it.

For those looking for something a bit more futuristic than two old Chevrolet shells stuck together, try your hands on the joystick of *Star Ship* ($29). The wingtips are removable and the game features a high score retention system, along with high-quality sound effects and auto power off.

More talking and more action with MB's *Electronic Talking Battleship* ($39). Man your battle stations in this new verbal version that features 100 different task force configurations. Plus, sound effects and flashing lights when you've pegged that cruiser or destroyer.



■ 'Golly-gee everyone! Look! It's the Batman LCD game! Eeeeek!' Is this the US incarnation of Su Pollard, or what?!

WOOF! WOOF!

Now wouldn't you like your own electronic dog to protect your valuables? Nasta has anticipated this need with the campy *Guard Dog* series. These three little guys have a pouch just the right size for stashing your important secrets. Just zip up and lock to the collar, and any attempt to pick him up will result in a scary WOOF! WOOF!

Music is always a hot topic, so try out Nasta's new *Horn Magic*, which changes your

humming in the mouthpiece to one of six brass instruments. It sounds authentic and looks really cool as it's got a high-tech shape and dull gold finish.

Also sounding out are Worlds of Wonder with their *Jaminator* ($129). This has got to be the most sophisticated, playable electronic guitar at the Toy Fair. This is no toy, though. It has five different group accompaniments for the background. Add to that digital representations of guitar (chords and riffs), keyboard and percussion. Due to the built-in harmonics — controlling both sync and key — you never sound pre-programmed. Any if you fancy using them in a group (Robin Candy, where are you?) you can connect two up together, and plug them both into an amplifier. Moulded in a sleek black and grey body, this is just the thing for all those budding musicians. There's even plug-in ROM packs for additional background tunes.

And then there's *Sound FX* ($24) from Mattel, the ultimate wristband sound device. Each of the four clamp to the wrist and deliver a range of pre-programmed sounds.

FIGHTER CARS

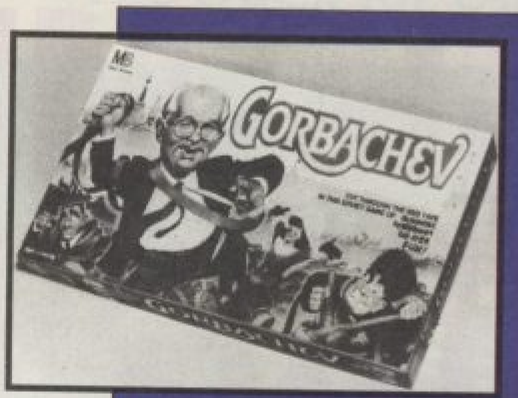
Take the wire guidance system used in advanced F-16 fighter planes and turn it to a really GOOD use. That's exactly what Worlds of Wonder have done with their *GT Super Screamers* ($189) slotless cars set. Gone are the days of attaching your cars to the metal strips, or picking the carpet fluff out cos it keeps shorting the circuit, now you just throw your car back on the black strip. And pushing the likes of Scalextric and TCR further back on the grid, *GT Super Screamers* also has 'realistic racing sounds' as the cars screech around the track.

No slots means that each car can be manoeuvred around the other. In fact they'll stay on the circuit by themselves, with no steering (until you push the trigger and step on the gas, er, make that electricity). The standard set comes with two cars and 20 feet of nine-inch-wide track.

Just as fun, and also high-tech, is Mattel's *Hot Wheels Line Racer* ($79) set. Their slotless cars can be used anywhere because they're radio-controlled. But with a difference, as they 'look' for the track below them using a contrast sensor.

Basically, the track can be made on any smooth service, and need only be a black line on a white floor (or vice-versa for street play!). What's even neater is that the car will seek out the track if it goes off — you don't have to put it back on the line. And, of course, the cars can also be used as standard remotes.

While toy guns receive little attention, water squirters are always fun. And LJN's *Water Squirts* ($6) are a real hoot. They appear to be a normal (?) ostrich, elephant and turtle, but squeeze the trigger to raise the head, lower the trunk, open the mouth, and the animal shoots a 15-foot stream (I bet he does — Ed). There's even a hand-sized Mario who shoots out of his finger when you press his foot! (Who said us Yanks do it the easy way?!)



REDS ON YER BEDS

We'll move off from electronics for just a moment. Leave it to Milton Bradley to show the world how to battle the Red menace. Unbelievably, they've come up with the *Gorbachev Game* — though, not quite the aggressive Commie-bashing boardgame you might expect from us paranoid Yanks.

Take turns trying to acquire French perfume, Japanese cameras and blue jeans in this whacky board game of Victory Through Luxury Items. And, yes, the game was actually shown to Mr G himself before it was let loose on the street. It's a real hoot, and a fine example of making capitalism pay off.

The only competition to it might be *Electronic Mall Madness*, wherein females compete to make purchases while moving throughout a 3-D representation of this most hallowed place. No dice, everything is announced by a synthesized mall announcer. As for money, well there are credit cards (what else?) and bank accounts just waiting to be used. The winner is the most cost-effective player.

Radar guns are always a good investment, so why not go ahold of Nasta's *Radartrak*. You, too, can play cops and robbers, or measure that fastball you've been bragging about. This great little gadget will measure objects moving at up to 199 mph. Very useful.

After eight days of humping little goodies around the Toy Fair, all I need now is a good supply of batteries to run the damn things. Next stop, Tandy.





■ All the fun of measuring speed by radar! This little beast can track objects moving at up to 199mph. Just what every American 14-year old wants to do, eh viewers?

TOY MONEY

Prices above are US dollars. Although, most will probably reach the UK shores, and certainly receive a price hike too. For instance, the Nasta HitStix we mentioned last year at £20 were imported by Matchbox into the UK and sold at around £30.



■ Well, lookyhere — a couple of hideous kids pretending to illustrate how thrilled they are to be playing GT Super Screamers. Sheesh.

GET TOUGH, MEAN AND ORIENTAL!

COMPETITION

WIN A LOAD OF MARTIAL ARTS LESSONS FROM MICROSTYLE PLUS: WATCHES! SHADES! POSTERS AND HEAPS MORE!



No, not marital aids! Martial arts! Which are quite different... maybe not. Anyway, this compo is most definitely about martial arts and specifically those played in Microstyle's latest basher, Oriental Games.

Oriental Games takes you off to the Far East to compete in a gruelling series of games played with the masters. Kick through Kung Fu, fight in Freestyle, clobber in Kendo and slap the fat in Sumo wrestling. But rather than being just another beat-'em-up, the ST, Amiga and PC versions feature a joystick editor allowing you to select the moves that can be actioned by moving the joystick. Check the previews in Boot-Up! for the full story.

COR, WISH I COULD DO THAT And soon, with a bit of luck and thanks to Microstyle, you could be up to the standard required to compete in Oriental Games: we're offering a set of ten martial arts lessons as the first prize! The lucky, and soon to be deadly, winner gets ten lessons paid for at their local centre in which ever oriental discipline they choose! It's a prize and a half! And the other half is a Microstyle goody parcel with featuring a watch, sunglasses, a frisbee, a credit-card wallet, posters and a t-shirt! And nine more bundles of goodies for runners-up!

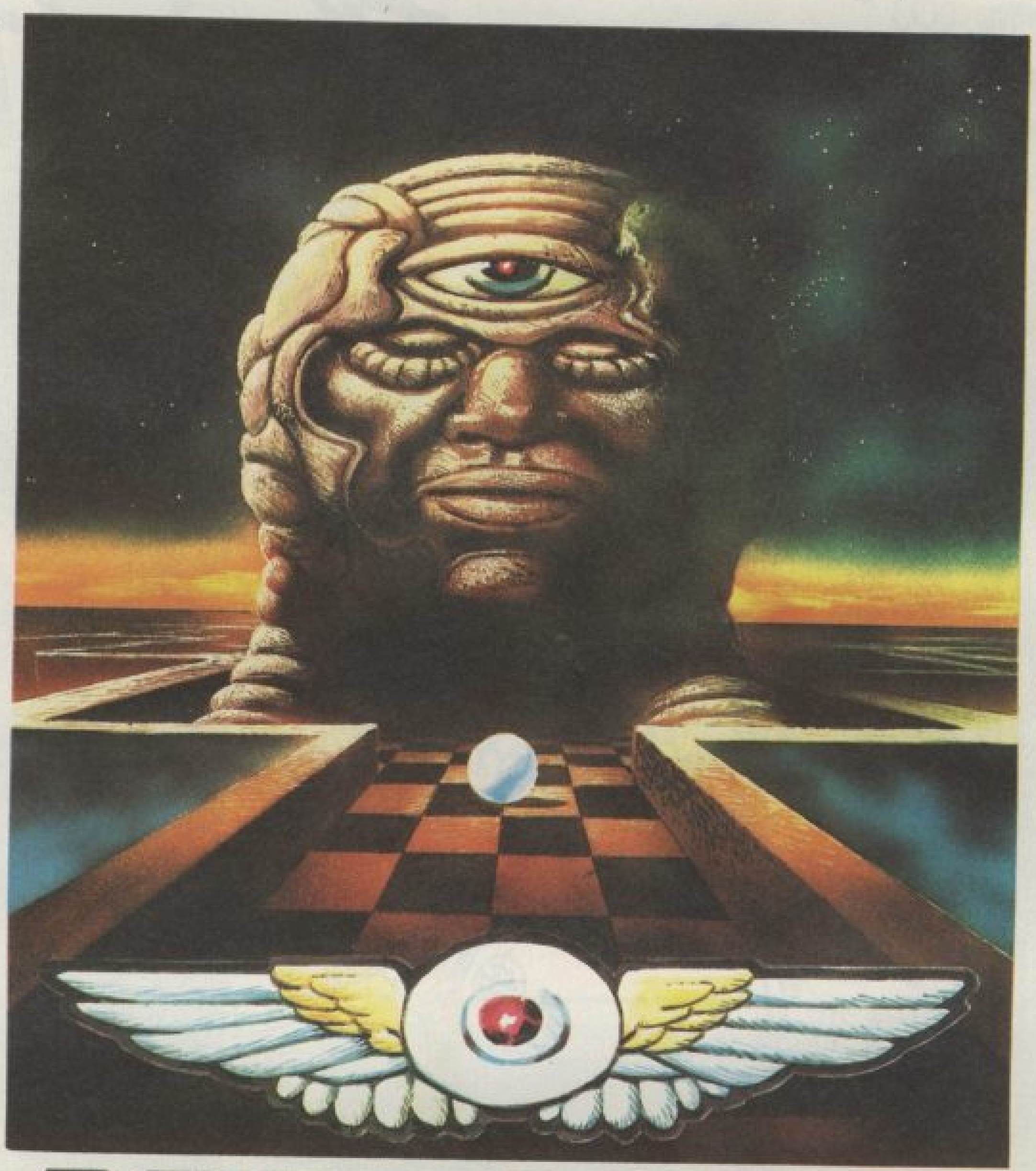
To be in with a chance of winning one of the prizes on offer there's a wordsearch to solve. Search out the 10 Oriental Games words, which may be written up, down, across or diagonally, ring them and post the coupon along with your name and address to: **NEWSFIELD, ORIENTAL GAMES COMPO, TGM, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY81JW.** Entries by May 15. Anything received after that will be force-fed to Richard Eddy.

ORIENTAL
GAMES
MICROSTYLE
KUNGFU
KENDO
JOYSTICK
SUMO
WRESTLING
FREESTYLE
MARTIAL

A	S	O	S	Y	E	A	R	R	S	A
K	E	N	U	C	M	Q	Y	A	E	R
L	B	K	O	D	N	E	K	M	L	B
G	A	M	E	S	A	L	U	A	Y	D
K	F	T	M	E	S	Y	I	R	T	K
E	U	W	N	R	A	T	K	T	S	K
L	F	R	N	E	R	S	T	C	E	C
Y	G	E	L	A	I	O	S	I	E	I
T	N	S	M	Y	M	R	Y	A	F	T
S	U	T	J	T	S	C	O	M	U	S
E	K	L	H	R	O	I	J	E	S	Y
E	M	I	G	C	I	M	F	U	T	O
R	N	N	W	W	A	V	U	M	S	J
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NAME...
ADDRESS...
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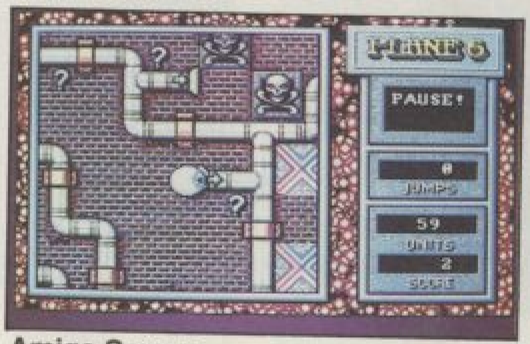
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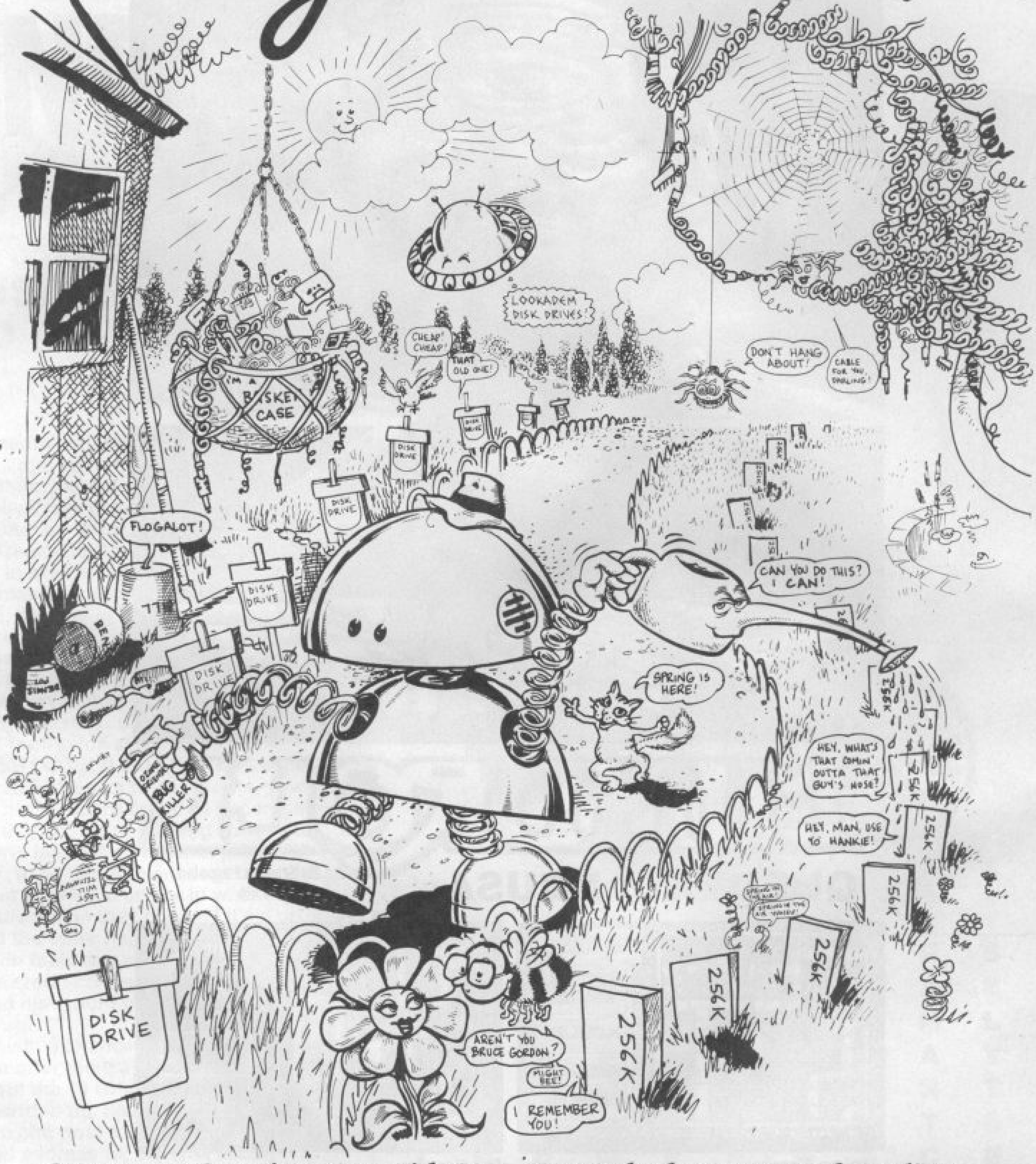
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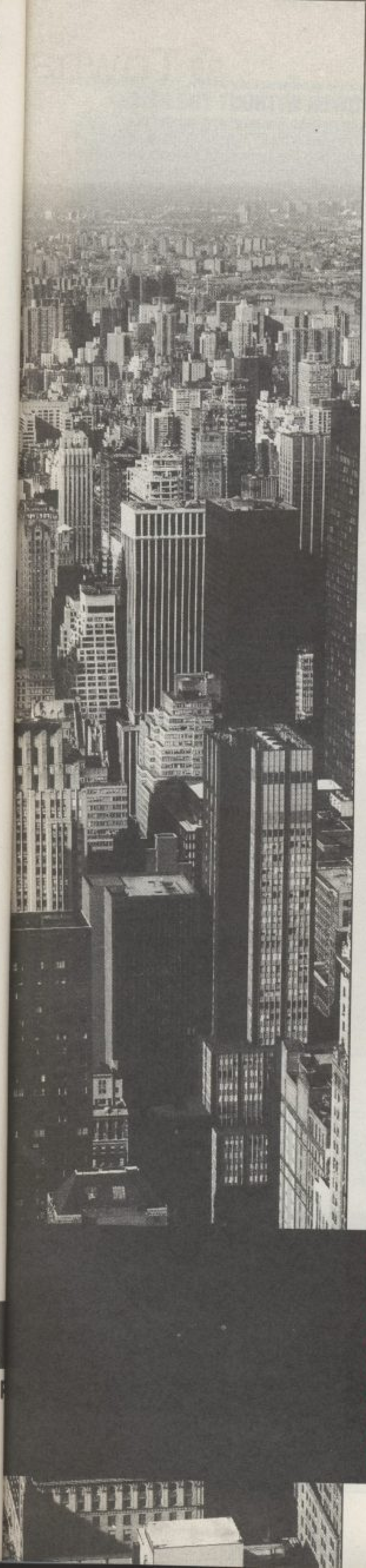
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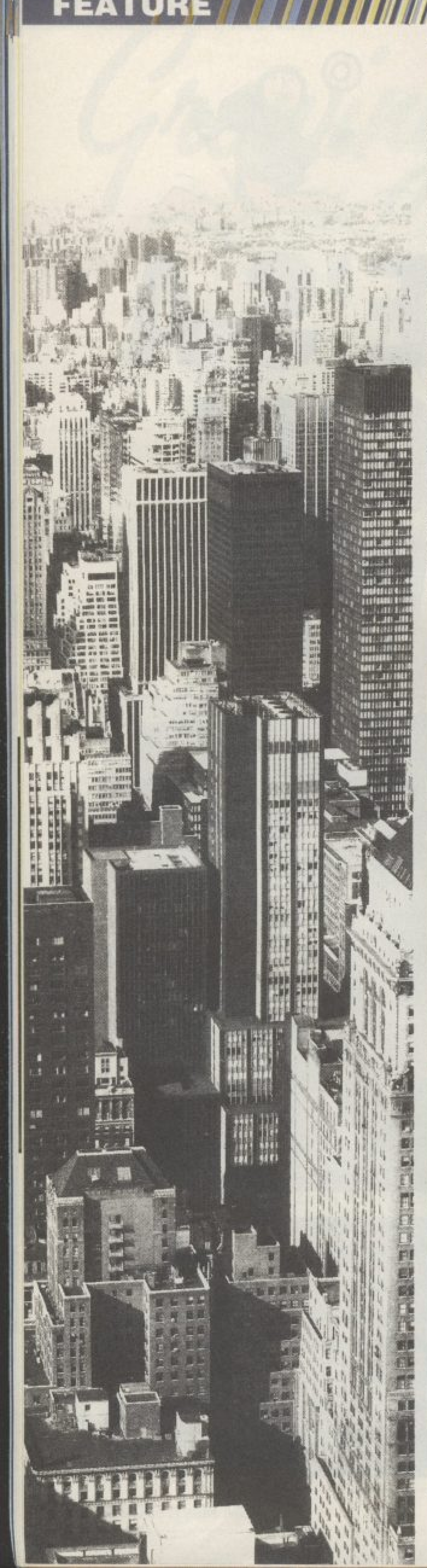




THERE'S A NEW GUY IN TOWN



It's now getting to be a regular occurrence: 'New wonder computer/console from Japan upstages everything released before it.' No sooner than you've set your sights on one machine than a better one appears. The latest development from the Land of the Rising Sun promises to be the last word in home computer entertainment, well for the next few months at least. Robin Candy takes a look at Fujitsu's FM Towns machine.



The name Fujitsu may not be instantly familiar to most home computer users but they did in fact build the first computer ever made in Japan — over 30 years ago! Today they're the world's biggest manufacturer of computers, as well as one of the top manufacturers of communications systems. The FM Towns machine is Fujitsu's first foray into the computer 'leisure' market and looks set to establish them as a market leader almost overnight.

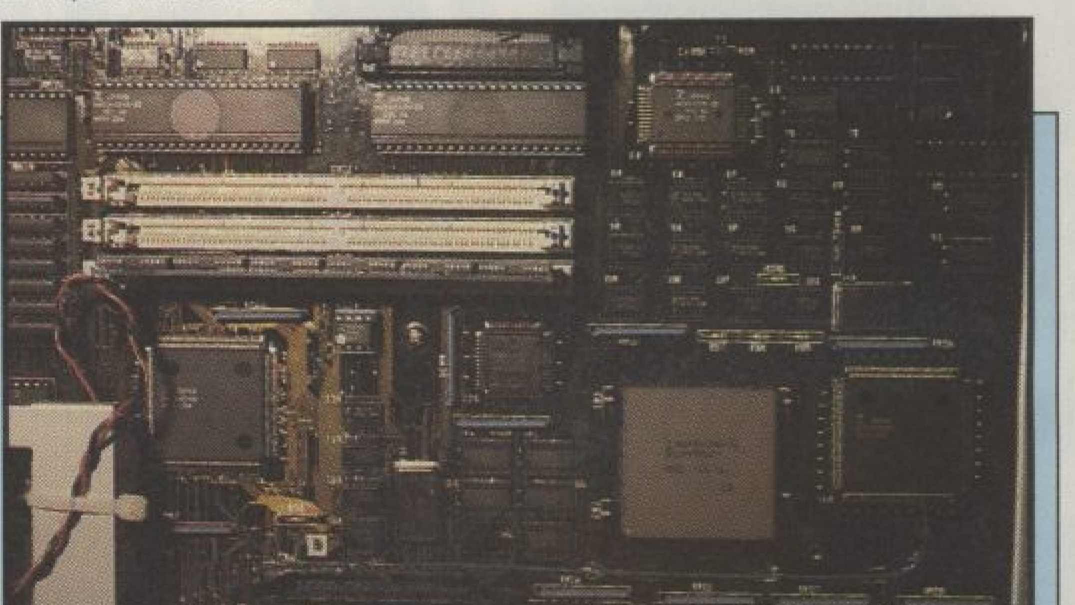
The machine itself doesn't actually offer anything new in terms of technology. It is, in fact, a PC. So what makes it such a gobsmacking machine? Well, for starters it's the first PC built with CD-ROM as standard, rather than treating it as another peripheral, it's got a super-fast 32-bit 80386 central processor and amazing graphics capabilities.

The technical specifications make it look like a high-powered business machine — something you'd initially expect from Fujitsu — but over in Japan it's clearly aimed at the home market (of course it can run PC business packages). Games are already available, and with Fujitsu touting the machine around top software houses like Psygnosis, Mirrorsoft (Dungeon Master has already been converted) and Electronic Arts, expect more to follow.

POWER WITHOUT THE PRICE

A basic FM Towns machine costs approximately £1300 (excluding any import taxes and the normal European price hike). A bit steep you may think but just look at what you get: a high resolution monitor, a CD-ROM unit (which can also be used as a normal CD player), 1Mb RAM, a 1Mb 3.5-inch disk drive and a 80386 processor (80386 machines are currently the PCs to own and normally cost around £2000). The top-of-the-range machine costs approximately £2300 and includes an additional 40Mb internal hard disk drive, another 1Mb 3.5-inch disk drive and an extra 1Mb of RAM.

The built-in CD-ROM unit is the heart of the machine. A single CD is capable of storing up to 540Mb of data, more than enough for any program. But you're not confined to storing just program data on CD, you can also store music, which opens up the possibilities for a truly professional sounding, interactive, synchronised game soundtrack (Cinemaware for real). As the processor controls the CD-ROM it can move the laser to any section of the CD. In practical terms this means that at any stage of a game the computer can skip to and play the appropriate part of the soundtrack.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE: Model IF £1300 (1Mb RAM, one disk drive), 2F £1500 (2Mb RAM, two disk drives), 1H £1900 (1Mb RAM, two disk drives, 20Mb internal hard disk), 2H £2300 (2Mb RAM, two disk drives, 40Mb internal hard disk). All prices are based on Japanese list prices at current exchange rates.
CPU: 80386 with an optional 80387 coprocessor.
RAM: Expandable to 8Mb.
GRAPHICS DISPLAY MODES: 640x480 pixels (256 colours onscreen, 16,770,000-colour palette).
640x480 pixels (16 colours onscreen, 4096-colour palette).
640x400 pixels (16 colours onscreen, 4096-colour palette).
360x240 pixels (the entire 32,768-colour palette can be displayed onscreen — just!).
320x240 pixels (the entire 32,768-colour palette can be displayed onscreen).
SPRITES: 16x16 pixel pattern (16 or 256 colours from a palette of 32,768), 896 simultaneous sprite patterns, 1024 sprites under simultaneous control.
SOUND: Stereo PCM, eight channels with a sampling frequency of 19.2kHz and stereo, four-operator FM with six channels.
STORAGE: One or two 1Mb 3.5-inch floppy disk drives, 540Mb CD-ROM, 20 or 40Mb internal hard disks (models 1H and 2H only).
EXPANSION SLOTS: three (model 1F), two (all other models).
CARD SLOTS: modem, SCSI, video.
DIMENSIONS: 150mm (w)x328mm (h)x400mm (d).
WEIGHT: 11Kg.





■ And here it is in it's full glory. The FM Towns machine shows the direction that computers will be going in the 90's. A fully integrated unit, the FM Towns delivers what other computers have aspired too. Whether it's for playing games or running a small business the FM Towns is the machine to own.

SOUND'S GOOD TOO

Not that Fujitsu have skimped in the sound chip department, the FM Towns is capable of eight channels of sampled sound and six channels of FM-synthesised sound (the same sound synthesis techniques used by many popular makes of synthesizer no less!). The end results are soundtracks and sound effects which are truly mindblowing. If you're musically minded, the FM Towns could rapidly become the focus of your music set up. A MIDI interface can be slotted into the one of the expansion ports on the back of the machine while software packages such as *TownsSOUND* and *Euphony II* allow you to program the built-in sound chip, score music and control MIDI devices. If sound chip programming isn't your cup of tea there's a built-in sound sampler which allows you to create your own wacky sounds in a matter of seconds.

If your interests are more graphical, the FM Towns is still the machine to go for. Depending on which display mode is selected the FM Towns can display up to 32,768 colours simultaneously, while in another of its display modes there's a colour palette comprising of over 16 million colours and shades. Add an optional video card and you can turn NTSC video signals (ours was an Japanese/American machine) into digital displays, turn digital displays into video or even superimpose graphics over video images. Fujitsu have already released an easy-to-use art program (*TownsPAINT*) designed to exploit the different display modes.

The FM Towns machine has a lot to offer: games that look, sound and play just like arcade originals; graphic packages that free you from the constraints of 16 colours and music capabilities that put other home computers to shame. The net result is a computer which can perform any function the home user could possibly want. 'The complete home entertainment centre' in fact!



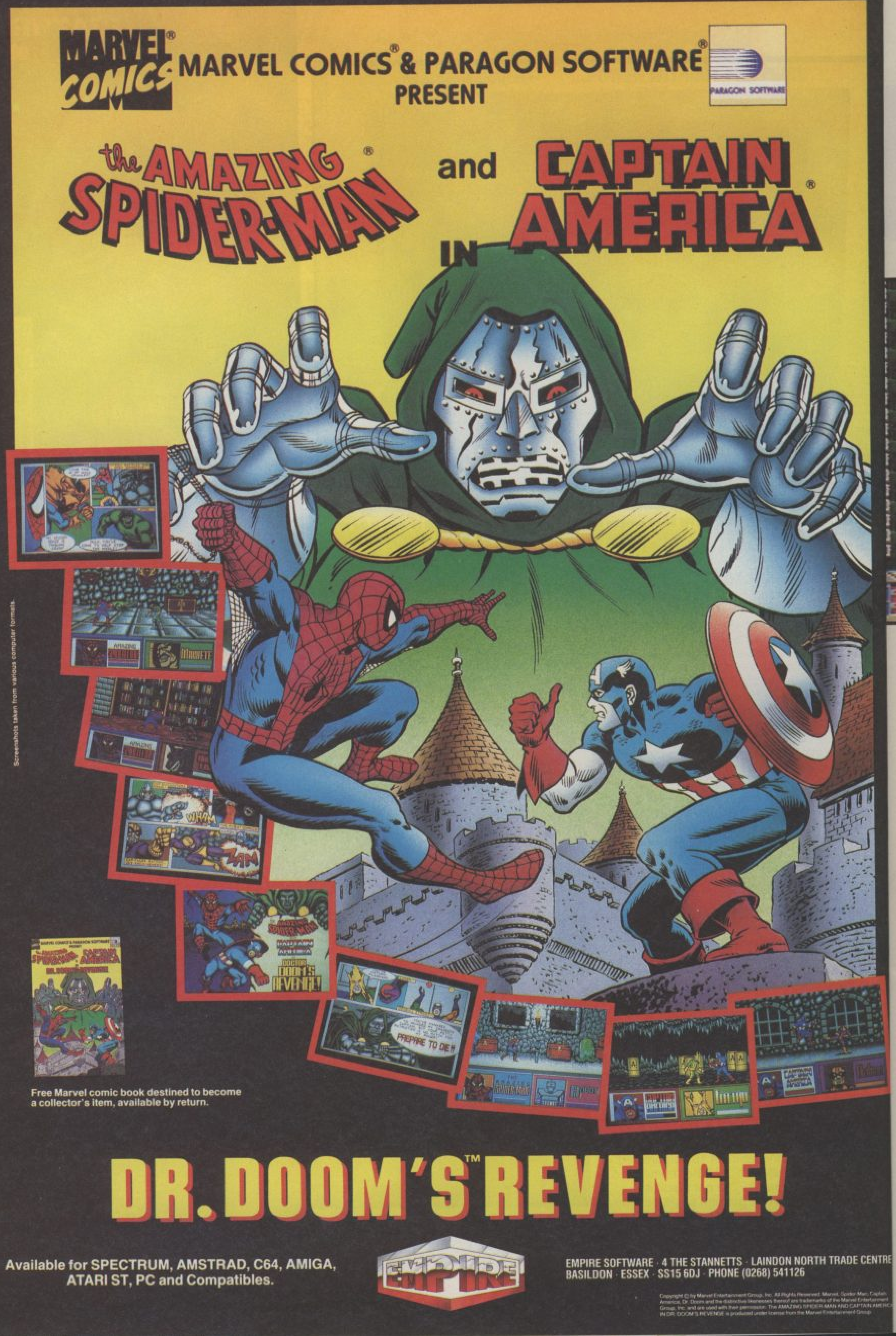


GAMES WITHOUT FRONTIERS

Currently there are approximately 20 games titles available for the FM Towns, with many more in the pipeline (including Zak McKraken and Indiana Jones - The Graphic Adventure). One of the first to appear was *Afterburner*. Previous conversions of the popular game were disappointing, the 16-bit versions were generally unplayable and the only 8-bit version of merit was for the Amstrad. Enter the FM Towns machine and what you've got is a near-perfect arcade copy. Graphics and sound are great and gameplay every bit as good as the arcade original. With the FM Towns there's no knowing what's going to happen next!

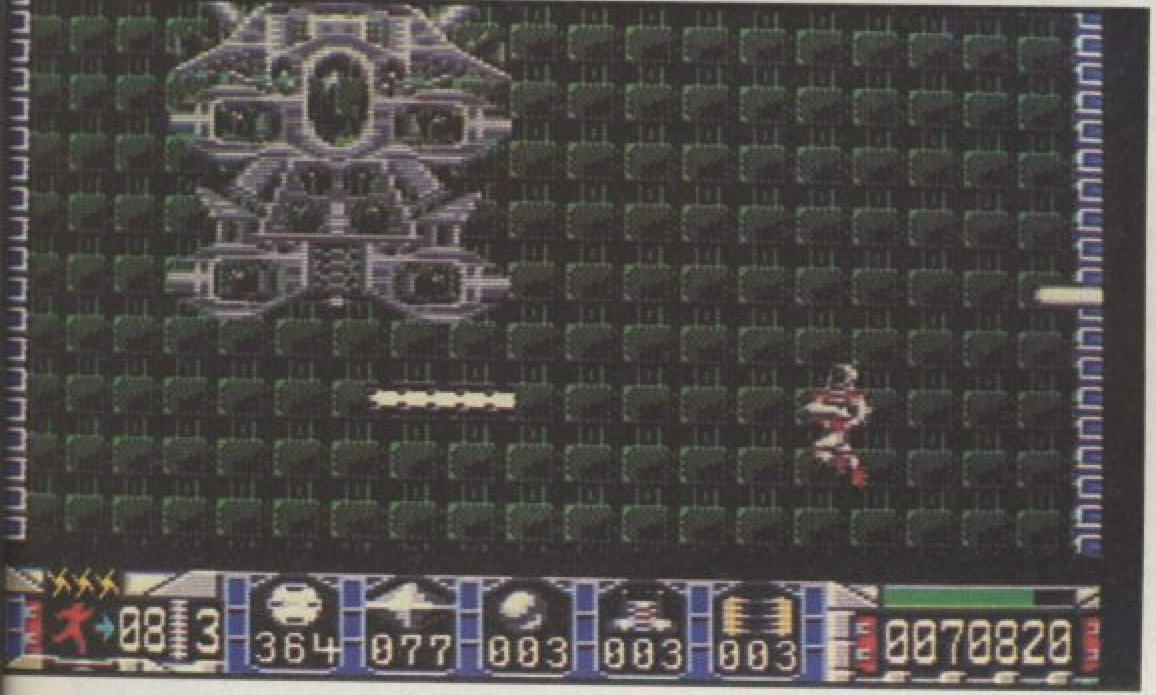


■ Not the aracde oringal but the FM Towns version of Afterburner. Not only do the graphics look great but the animation is smooth as well!



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The Games machine



■ Sound effects energetic, music dramatic, and gameplay addictive — Turrican page 40

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GAMES INDEX

Something bad is breeding on Xelos...

INFESTATI

Kal Solar is one of the leading agents for the Interplanetary Federation; an aggressive, unrelenting man committed to restoring law, peace and order to the galaxy. But even such a resourceful quick-witted man as he could not have prepared for the monumental task he has been given, an vermin extermination mission in the Alpha II colony on Xelos, 4th moon of planet CX.D3a.

The colony was constructed to house a secret scientific research group, from which they could observe the bizarre conditions on CX.D3a. The surface is a thin layer of ice, translucent in places, and believed to encompass a life-supporting sea of gas. The gas leaks out from between cracks in the ice and forms a pink aura around CX.D3a.

Changes observed both above and below the ice led the scientists to the conclusion that the ice/gas world supported intelligent life, and they regularly beamed reports back to Earth on their findings and theories. The reports came in for nine months, measuring progress... But then the reports became scrambled, distorted beyond recognition or interrupted by bursts of static. After two weeks of unclear transmissions, the reports stopped completely.

The last report received told of aliens killing off the scientists and disrupting the central computer, making it hostile to humans. The air had become more and more poisonous and what appeared to be eggs had been laid. The last few seconds of the report were a frantic plea for help.

As the game begins, you, as Kal agent Solar, are already on the airless surface of Xelos and above the underground complex where the Alpha II colony is, or rather *was*, held. You have a first-person view of events, looking out from a helmet; you're inside a spacesuit, with built-in computer detection and defence systems (with heads-up display) and jet pack. Your first task is simply to enter the colony but just this requires effort — you have to log-on to begin the exploration mission and find the access lift, fighting off sentry droids on the way, and many of the suit's capabilities need to be used to do this.

The removable helmet has four gauges essential to your survival, arranged around the inside of its visor. The *oxygen* supply in your tanks is the most important but your *temperature*, either particularly high or low, can have a detrimental effect on health and rate of oxygen intake. You're likely to be exposed to lots of *radiation* in the course of your search, and so a close eye should be kept on this to avoid it building up to fatal levels. And for basic navigation, there's a *compass*, which points to the moon's magnetic north.

The helmet's HUD can produce seven types of information, each accessed from the numeric keypad and appearing in front of your vision, but not impairing it. The first display is for *navigation* and shows the level you're on, coordinates of your exact location and your bearing. *Status* shows number of kills made, time elapsed since start of mission, operation mode (Reconnaissance or Tactical), eggs remaining (begins at 167) and whether any supplies have been dropped at the moon's, erm, drop*zone* by the drop*ship*(!). *Inventory* shows what's being carried and how many cyanide gas cartridges you have, and *life support* traces your heartbeat and monitors food and medication levels. The *scratch pad* is where notes can be typed in for later reference, and *atmospheric analysis* shows



ON

PSYGNOSIS

TGM STAR PLAYER

GAME **INFESTATION**	
PRODUCER **PSYGNOSIS**	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£24.95
ATARI ST	£24.95

AMIGA 88%

In a really neat intro, an astronaut jets through space in fast, realistic perspective before landing on Xelos. The filled 3-D of the game is generally plain but is detailed in places and moves at speed, albeit a little jerky. The helmet graphics are well drawn and suitably hi-tech and although music is pretty cliche and MOR, the harsh, Darth Vader-like breathing when the helmet is in position is excellent.



■ Your heads-up display helmet provides a view into the outside wolrd. Here it displays relevant navigation details to help you find your way around the vast research complex.



■ With a scenario that echos the cyberpunk film Aliens and addictive gameplay Psygnosis ahev come up with another hit game.

radiation level and gas content of your current location. *Avionics* comes into play when you use the jet-pack or MMU (Manned Manoeuvre Unit) and displays an artificial horizon, fuel level, velocity and altitude. *Sights* simply shows where your pulse rifle is being aimed.

As you explore the rooms and corridors of the complex (providing you get down there in the first place!), blast doors separating them, various features and objects (see box) are discovered. Shuttles can take you swiftly from A to B, while the ventilation tunnels allow you to reach otherwise inaccessible areas, but going is slow and you need to find something to remove the grates covering the shafts. Radiation areas should be passed through as quickly as possible, to avoid overdose, so if there's a network terminal in such a region you'd better work fast. Network terminals are linked to the central computer and provide lots of handy information, best of which are maps, which can be zoomed in and out of.

The locations of alien eggs are marked on maps and the elimination of these is the primary objective of each level. When an egg is found, it's a simple case of releasing a gas cartridge (making sure your helmet's on) top 'kill' it and prevent the hatching of another alien.

Ultimately, you must find the power source for the complex and cause the reactor to blow, triggering the destruction of the planet, the eggs, aliens and their mother. Of course, escaping from the moon before it goes critical would also be quite a good thing...

Infestation lacks originality in both its design and execution, but this has little bearing on the content and value of this exciting arcade adventure. A lone, brave soldier tentatively exploring unfamiliar territory, knowing that there're foul aliens hiding somewhere in the shadows, maybe just around the next corner, is an old idea. An arcade adventure giving first-person perspective in filled 3-D, with things to shoot and objects to collect and use, is an old idea. But in *Infestation*, the plot, graphics and gameplay form a cohesive, quality product of high entertainment value.

Helmet graphics surrounding the playing area create the appropriate, enclosed, claustrophic atmosphere when combined with the rasping breath sound — you often can't wait to get your helmet off and the freedom that allows. But you can't do that in many places, unless you want to meet an early grave; it's very important to keep an eye on all the gauges.

Peeking around corners of later levels is nerve-wracking — you can never tell when a caterpillar-like alien is going to jump out and run for you. Being able to look up and down helps increase the realism of exploration and adds to the tension. There's plenty of rooms and objects to find, and then you've got to puzzle out how to use them and what to use them *on* — a sometimes difficult task.

Infestation is a game of great atmosphere and depth, and lets you discover what it's like to be an intergalactic Rentokill man!

Warren Lapworth

EQUIP YOURSELF

Although there are many objects to find and utilise in the Alpha II complex, some are more useful than others...

- ***Compass*** **Shows your exact position in the area immediately surrounding you.**
- ***Infra-red scanner*** **There are some things important to success and survival that are invisible to the naked eye. The scanner rose-tints your world and makes them come clear.**
- ***Keys*** **For true freedom in Alpha II, key-cards are necessary to open certain doors and operate lifts and shuttles.**
- ***Extra oxygen*** **Unless you work very quickly, the supply you begin with won't be enough so oxygen crystals must be found.**
- ***Batteries*** **Your sophisticated suit doesn't run by clockwork. Its multiplicity of systems drain power and may need recharging from batteries.**

Living on cloud nine

CLOUD KINGDOMS

LOGOTRON

Looking nothing like a small tree, Baron Von Bonsai has stolen Terry's magic crystals and scattered them around the Cloud Kingdoms. Using the magic crystals, the Baron has enslaved Cloud Fairies whose only hope happens to be the aforementioned Tel, the incredible bouncing ball man.

After choosing which of the four Cloud Kingdoms he wishes to clear first, Terry jumps in his helicopter and sets off to find the Fairies, on what he presumes will be simple walkways. Not so, Bonsai has turned the lovable Fairies into aggressive insects and giant rolling blackballs (Don't ask *how*.) Unless he bounces to safety, these guys will hand out some serious personal damage.

Of course, Tel is up against a time limit: only 99 manukas (one manuka ´ four seconds) to complete his quest. The Kingdoms are fairly messy places, with items scattered all over the place. Some, however, can prove pretty useful — so pick 'em up. See separate box for details of what's on offer.

The Kingdoms also have a strange array of obstacles lying about: icey tiles, magnets, bumpers and disappearing tiles to name but a few. Also, watch your step, as the expedition takes place high in the air. One slip and Terry will fall into the dark void below.

The amount of gems to be found on each level is indicated at the bottom of the screen, along with lives, the notorious timer and current score. And not even Arthur Daley can help our Tel if he falls off or runs out of manukas. Finally, without wishing to put you off, there are another three levels to go...

Mark Caswell

TGM STAR PLAYER



■ Looking more than a might peeved the Amiga Terry sets off around the cloud kingdoms in a bid to show Baron Von Bonsai that no one messes with a green ball's fairies and gets away with it.
■ C64 Terry looks non to happy either at the prospect of facing swarms of aggressive insects.



GAME **CLOUD KINGDOMS**	
PRODUCER **LOGOTRON**	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£24.99
C64	£9.99/£14.99
PC	£29.99

AMIGA 86%

The game kicks off with a bouncy, happy little tune. Indeed, the whole game gives this cheery, happy atmosphere that makes you feel like throwing up. Nah, only kidding, *Cloud Kingdoms* is very good, at least it's better than *Starblaze*. The graphics are wonderful, with colourful, bold sprites rampaging around some very treacherous mazes. This is a frustrating game, but pleasantly so, thankfully.

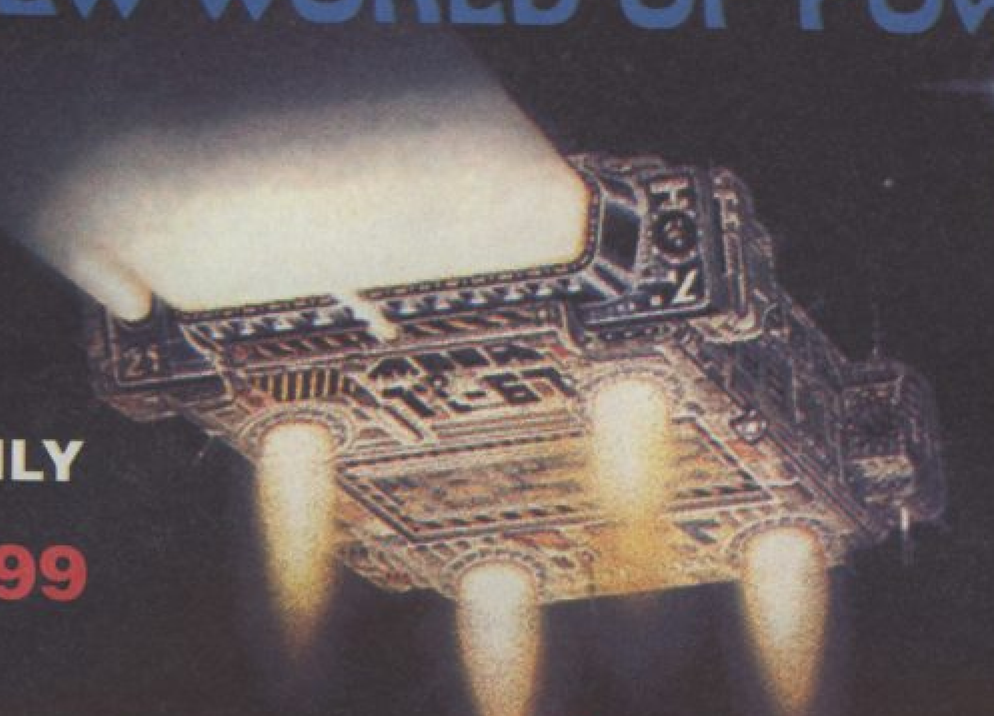
C64 89%

The atmosphere of the Amiga is definitely kept, as is the difficulty. The usually blocky C64 sprites are surprisingly detailed, but the backdrops are perhaps the most impressive feature. (Though some of the layouts look as if they took their inspiration from elsewhere — arcade and puzzle games, perhaps?) As with the Amiga, a game that is a pleasure to play — even more so on the C64, with improved playability!



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Meanwhile, back at the stadium

TRACK & FIELD II

TGM STAR PLAYER

KONAMI

As with the arcade version, the Nintendo *Track & Field* has spawned an equally impressive sequel.

There are three modes of play: training (12 events), championship (12) and player versus player (fencing, Taekwando and arm wrestling).

For the biggest challenge, go for gold in the championship mode; four days, each filled with three main events and two optional (*pistol/lightgun shooting* and *hang-gliding*). So choose a country to represent and off you go. Oi! Come back! Not off you go home... Wimp!

The first event is *fencing*, where you must create a fence 100 metres long and hammer in all the nails. Erm, no. That's a fib. What you must in fact do is to stick your opponent five times (This all sounds a tad dodgey —Ed). The second event is the *triple jump*, probably one of the hardest events to master. With the final event on the first day being the cool, *freestyle swim-*





■ A hark-back to the good old days of gaming when Ocean had just released their conversions of Hypersports — the clay pigeons are back with a vengeance and gunning them down isn't as easy as it first appears. Above: Hey, this isn't Combat School! The Konami game designers have got over-enthusiastic with their creations and slotted in some bicep-busting action (Isn't that Slyvester Stallone on the right?!)

GAME **TRACK & FIELD II**
PRODUCER **KONAMI**
VERSIONS
NINTENDO £29.99

NINTENDO 91%

There's no getting away from sore fingers in the sequel. Graphically and sonically the game is great, with some surprisingly detailed sprites running, jumping and performing seemingly impossible acrobatic feats. Sound consists of a pleasant tune, cheering (and sometimes jeering) crowds and spot effects that create a great atmosphere. Two players make the product even more playable.

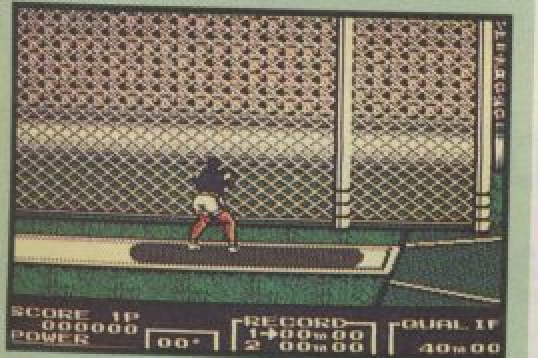
ming (choose either front crawl or butterfly).

On the second day, aspiring Greg Louganis's can smash their heads open whilst practising jumping from *boards* at heights that only lemmings would attempt. After that comes the addictive *clay pigeon* shooting, which needs a dead eye and steady hand to complete, with the *hammer throw* finishing off the day (and probably some of the crowd if you're not very good at it).

Day three 'kicks' off with the ancient martial art of *Taekwando*. followed by the *pole vault* and *canoeing*. The fourth and final day 'shoots' off (?) with *archery*, with the *hurdles* and *horizontal bar* to finish off the championship.

It's tough out there, so have plenty and Lucozade and Mars at the ready to entertain yourself while watching everyone else get exhausted.

Mark Caswell



■ Above: Hammerfist from Activision or hammer-throwing from Konami, the gameplay's just as good though not equally violent. Below: It's The Archers! Or is it Robin Hood? Maybe William Tell. Whatever, tightening your strings will make you go all of a quiver.



In the deep...

MIDWINTER

RAINBIRD

While most agree the holes in the ozone layer are causing global warming, Rainbird have put their necks on the line and predicted a global freeze in the the year 2099. Frankly, I know where I'll lay my money.

The big freeze in *Midwinter* isn't caused by everyone suddenly switching to Sinclair C5s or saying no to flatulence-inducing foods, but rather to a meteor crashing into Earth causing a polar shift. The ice age causes most of the landmass to disappear, leaving just one main area called Midwinter

The inhabitants of Midwinter - generally peaceful, law abiding souls - have been threatened by General Masters and his band of mercenaries. Masters and his men plan to take over the land for their own purposes, but here to thwart their deeds is... drum roll... Captain John Stark, leader of the Free Villages Peace Force.

To control Midwinter, General Masters and this men must capture and hold the Heat Mines. It is up to you as Captain Stark to recruit enough volunteers to fight back. The game begins with Masters having taken over the three radio stations, so you must start your recruitment drive on foot (or rather skis). Visiting the townsfolk increases your forces, but on your travels you'll bump into Masters' goons. They will stop at nothing to thwart your task.

When people are contacted you can send them to find other volunteers (you can control them as well as Stark), but as interaction plays a big part in this game be careful who you send to whom. It's no good sending someone to recruit their worst enemy.

Mark Caswell

GAME **MIDWINTER**
PRODUCER **RAINBIRD**
VERSIONS
AMIGA £29.99
ATARI ST £29.99

ATARI ST 94%

Atari ST MicroProse have surpassed themselves on this game - a 200 page manual is definitely not environmentally friendly. Thankfully the manual can be dispensed with as the game, while involved, is easy to get in to. Graphics are the most impressive feature though, solid 3D sprites and atmospheric presentation make *Midwinter* an excellent buy for all strategy buffs.



So, how do you go about creating a 94%, Star Player and generally all-round ruddy brill game like Midwinter? We asked Mike Singleton, author of Midwinter, that on page 70.

TGM STAR PLAYER





Can you feel the...

LIFE FORCE

Konami

Eons ago a hideous creature was spawned in some remote corner of the Universe. It's still alive... The creature's name is Zelos and it has an insatiable craving for galaxies - not the chocolate variety, you understand. But the clusters of stars and planetary bodies that appear as swirls when viewed from a great distance. The theories behind black holes are utter nonsense; the reason for the apparent missing bits in space has nothing whatsoever to do with imploding stars. Indeed, nothing could be further from the truth. Black holes, if that's what you must call them, have been created by Zelos' feeding habits.

Devouring galaxies is no way to behave. Something must be done to bring Zelos' table manners up to scratch. An enormous gob-stopper is not the answer. Why, of course, there's you...

It's all very well putting on a brave face, but what do you do when something is the size of numerous galaxies. Zelos is huge. And the only way to kill him is to brave the six terror zones that exist inside his gigantic intergalactic body. That's it, make sure you're in the vicinity of Zelos' next meal. You'll be swallowed whole. Just pray Zelos has brushed his teeth recently otherwise you're in for a very smelly time.

You pilot the latest in starfighter technology, the Vic Viper or the RoadBritish Space Destroyer (depending whether you are player one or two). A range of devastating weapons are yours to command, providing you collect them first of course. Destroying certain attacking aliens leaves glowing orbs. Collect the orbs and speed-ups, missiles, ripple lasers, plutonic lasers, options and force fields could be yours.

The terror zones are Cell Stage 1, Volcanic Stage, The Prominence Stage, Cell Stage 2, Themple Stage and finally Mechanical City Stage. In each section you will face, along with rampaging aliens, gun turrets, missile bases and many surprises. All very nasty.

End-of-level bad guys like Golem, Cruiser Tetron, Intruder, Tutankhamanattack (!), Giga, and Zelos's Heart and Soul try to make sure you don't get out alive. Can you save the universe from a fate worse than a Shapala curry lunch?

Life Force is tough and gets no easier. There are only half a dozen terror zones, but they certainly live up to their names. If you own a Nintendo and love a good blast-'em-up, look no further than this game.

Mark Caswell

The Vic Viper - Constructed at a cost of 60 trillion Gradian dollars, the Vic Viper is the pride of all Gradius. A pilot can pull 600 G's at warp speed 9 and still fell as if he is lounging in a La-Z-Boy.

The RoadBritish Space Destroyer - The people of Latis have always been known for their wondrous engineering skills, and the RoadBritish Space Destroyer proves it. In fact, this is the only starship in the galaxy to have beaten the Vic Viper in time trials. Nice ship, shame about the name.

TGM STAR PLAYER

GAME **LIFE FORCE**
PRODUCER **KONAMI**
VERSIONS
NES £29.99

NES **88%**

There's nothing to beat a good bit of gratuitous violence. Graphically *LIfe Force* is excellent. The chunky sprites are very colourful and shift round the screen almost faster than the eye can follow. For the first few games many lives will be lost sussing out the countless traps that exist for the unwary. Once the attack patterns have been learnt, however, all hell can be let loose. The wide range of weaponry is very welcome, but it is a tad annoying to have to collect so many power up orbs to access them. Oh well, I suppose it shows that I need some more practice, so if you will excuse me...



Dirk is daring yet again

DRAGON'S L
ESCAPE FROM SINGE

Mmmm... Work this one out. Originally, on the laser disk, there was *Dragon's Lair*. Then there was *Dragon's Lair: Escape from Singe's Castle*. Then there was *Space Ace*. So, how come we had *Space Ace* a few months ago, and now Empire are releasing *Singe's Castle*? There must be a perfectly reasonable explanation, but I'll be darned if I know. Not that anyone here's complaining. The Amiga version of *Escape from Singe's Castle* is probably the best Don Bluth game we've ever had the pleasure to play.

Dirk (the Daring?) is back in the dungeons where he must rescue Princess Daphne from the clutches of Singe (the Dragon?) and the diabolically evil Shape Shifter, who lurks in the dank catacombs of the castle. And being a polymorph you never know quite where or what he's going to pop up in next.

But let's not get too far ahead of ourselves, the first task upon loading is to scan the piles of options available. These include linking Singe's Castle with its predecessor and switching on and off the audio, helper and flipper options. Unavailable in *Space Ace*, the *helper*



■ All that hopping across magic chequer boards has gone to Dirk's heads — both of them. Seeing double won't help him in the long trek through Singe's castle and back again — he may be doubly daring but he'll get twice as scared





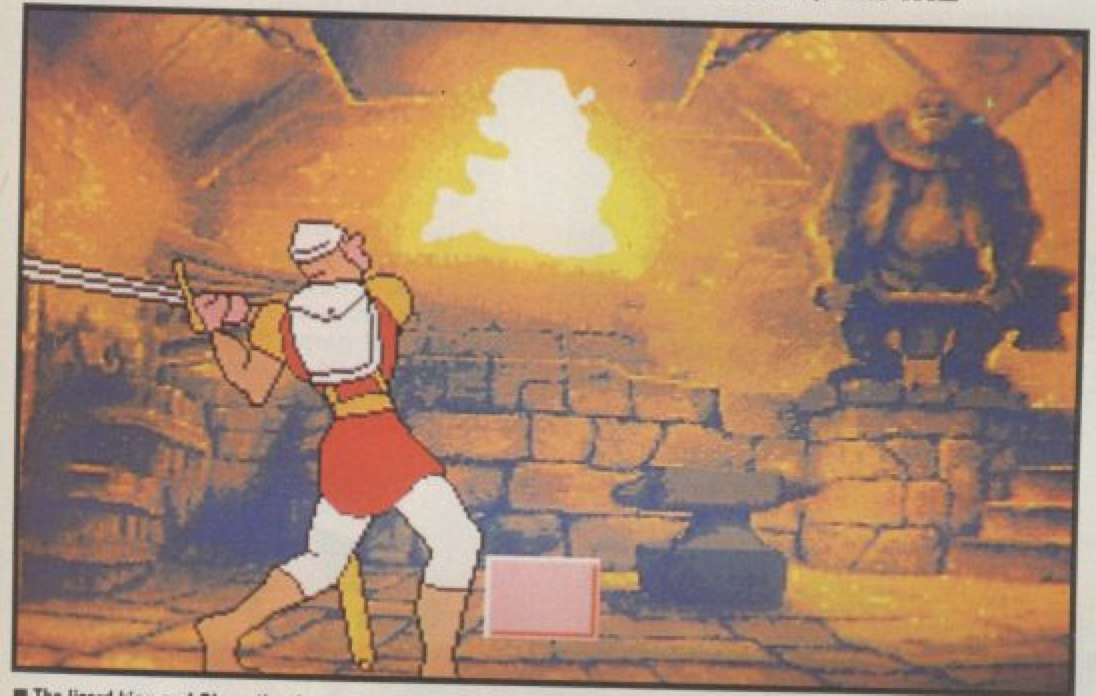
SLAIR: [...]GE'S CASTLE

GAME **DRAGON'S LAIR: ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE**	
PRODUCER **READYSOFT/ EMPIRE**	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£44.95
ATARI ST	£44.95
PC	£44.95

AMIGA **80%**

Though *Dragon's Lair: Escape from Singe's Castle* is a vast improvement over the previously-released Don Bluth creations, it's still not worth £45 — even with all the options. Movement is smooth, with the best animation of the series — some of the expressions on Dirk's face have to be seen to be believed. Sound is a mixture of arcade quality speech and music. (I'm sure on one section Dirk was humming to himself.) A purchase for anyone who thinks they should have one of the trilogy, and for those who can't get enough it (and if you've a hard drive *and* 1Mb all the better!). Neither will be disappointed, but neither will be able to afford the taxi fare back home again!

READYSOFT/EMPIRE



■ The lizard king and Singe the dragon stand between Dirk the Daring and his darling damsel Daphne, much like Borf and his minions did with Dexter and Kimberly in Bluth's Space Ace. But with his mighty sword honed on that anvil and a smattering of options, he'll have a less troublesome time

option flicks up pointers to tell you which way to go (but you must be quick). The flipper option, however, repeats some of the screens, but mirrors them so you never know what's coming next. (In 512K mode some of the options aren't available.) You can also choose the number of lives (from three to a much-needed five) and one of three difficulty levels. In *easy* mode only a small section of the game can be played, as you get better *medium* difficulty allows you to see a bit more. So with full confidence (and a lot of practice), you can tackle the full game on *hard* level.

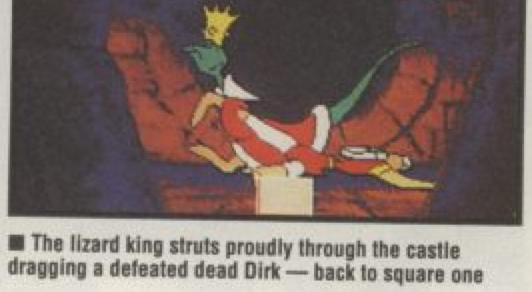
Plenty of obstacles stand between our valiant hero and the warm arms of his loving Princess. Like *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace*, the player has only limited control over the character. Disappearing tiles, anarchic robotic horses, psychotic Mud Men and scaly lizards (among others) all vie for the honour of killing Dirk.

Death is also quite an interesting subject, and one than shouldn't be avoided for the first few games. Some of the death sequences are hilarious, and well worth watching over and over again.

Singe's Castle is, unlike *Space Ace* has proved to be, both addictive and long-lasting. This is all due to the number of different options that can be combined in many interesting ways. Indeed, Readysoft claim that no two games will be exactly the same (so mappers can put their graph paper away). The evil Shape Shifter lurks somewhere in the bowels of the castle, are you man enough to brave the traps and pitfalls in your attempt to kill him and release Daphne. (Goodness only knows what Kimberly will say!)

Mark Caswell





■ The lizard king struts proudly through the castle dragging a defeated dead Dirk — back to square one

Flip those tiles to form a...

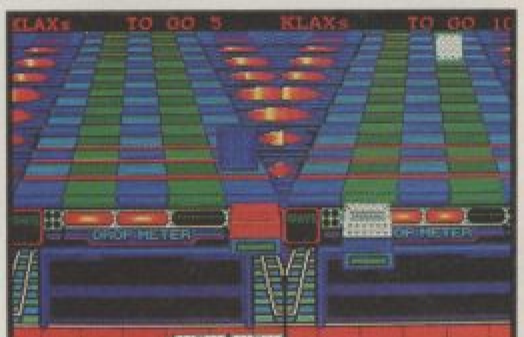
KLAX

TENGEN/DOMARK

The dictionary, according to Domark (not TGM! — Ed), states that a klax is a collection of three tiles of the same colour arranged either vertically, horizontally or diagonally. The player (players in 16-bit versions) start the game by choosing one of the three options on offer. Start on either wave one with no bonus and three drops per game, wave six with a 100000 point bonus and four drops per game, or wave 11 with a 200000 bonus and five drops per game. Once started you are faced with a long vertical stretch of play area. At the start, this is empty but it doesn't stay that way for very long.

Different coloured tiles flip end over end towards you. You control a flipper upon which five tiles can be balanced at one time, and below the flipper are a row of five bins. It is into these that you must drop the tiles to create klaxes, move too slowly and the tiles will drop. Depending on the level, you are allowed a certain number of drops, too many and it's end of game. Flashing tiles are wild cards that can be used as any colour tiles (useful in panic situations). At the top of the screen you are informed how many klaxes are needed to complete the level. And, of course, as soon as one is formed the tiles disappear, making way for further construction. Though, be warned, if you let the bins fill up it's end of game.

Mark Caswell



■ Klax! It's like nothing you've played before! Erm... Well, except Tetris. Colour tiles come hurtling down the screen, it's up to you to arrange tiles of a similar colour in a line horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Crazy paving, ahoy!

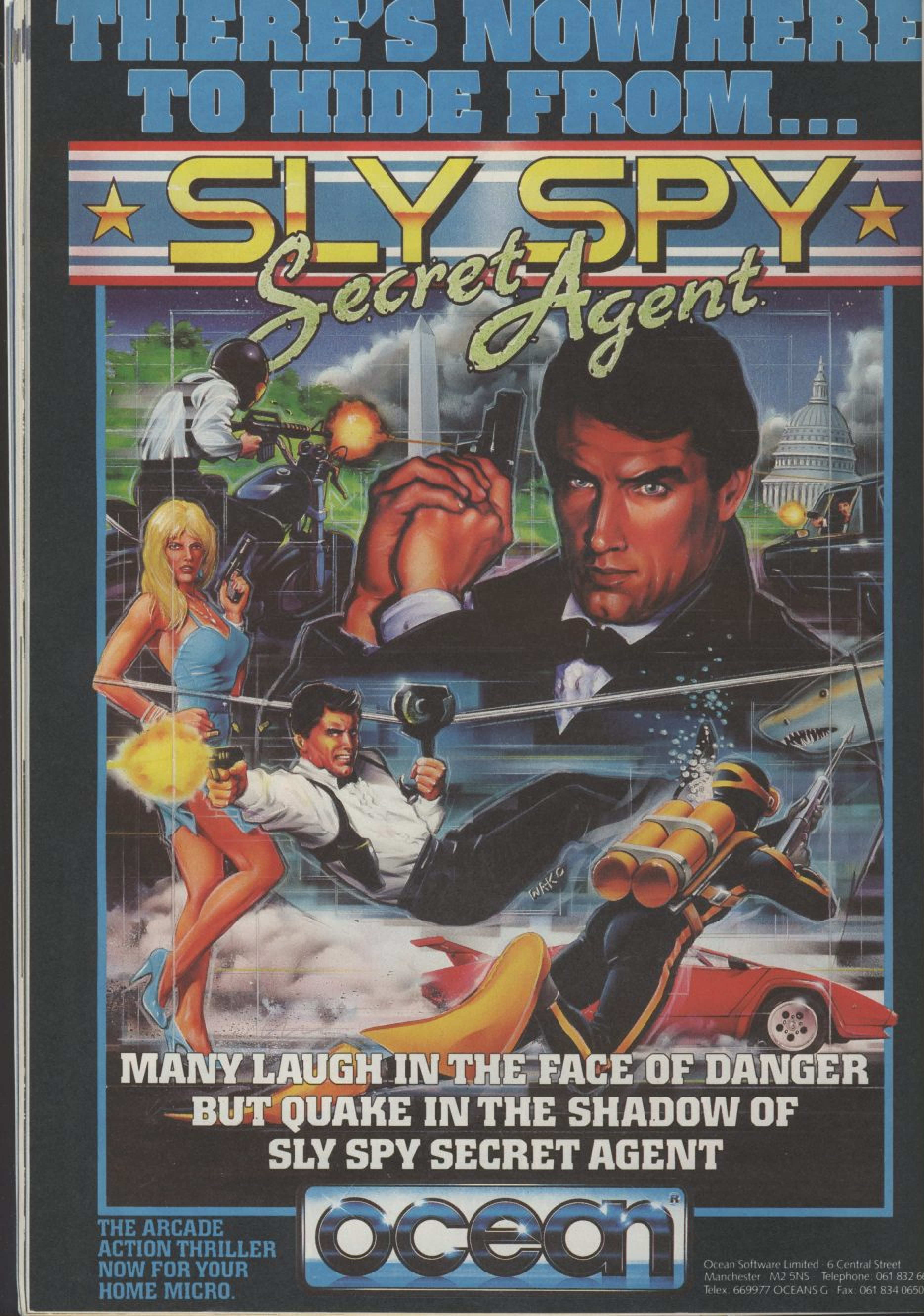
GAME **KLAX**	
PRODUCER	
TENGEN/DOMARK	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£19.99
ATARI ST	£19.99
C64	£9.99/£14.99
SPECTRUM	£9.99/£14.99
CPC	£9.99/£14.99

ATARI ST 92%

This game is so frustrating, the controls are a little tricky to master but patience reaps rewards. Graphically, *Klax* is very good indeed, with different backdrops for each level. Panic situations are all too common, but a clear head is needed to work out klax patterns. Unlike *Escape from the Planet of the Robot Monsters*, *Klax* isn't instantly playable, it needs patience and very quick reactions. To my mind this is the sort of game that grows on you, and never let's you go.

TGM STAR PLAYER





THERE'S NOWHERE
TO HIDE FROM...
SLY SPY
Secret Agent
MANY LAUGH IN THE FACE OF DANGER
BUT QUAKE IN THE SHADOW OF
SLY SPY SECRET AGENT
THE ARCADE
ACTION THRILLER
NOW FOR YOUR
HOME MICRO.
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No defences left apart from a 'copter called...

DYTER-07

RELINE/RAINBOW ARTS

GAME **DYTER-07**	
PRODUCER	
RELINE/RAINBOW ARTS	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£19.99
ATARI ST	£19.99

AMIGA 80%

A bright, colourful game whose main fault is the lack of detail in some graphics. Scrolling's smooth in all directions, sprite movement fast, and loud, lively sound effects help add pace to the gameplay.

Ecologically friendly washing powder, takeaway cartons, washing-up liquid and hairspray plus the careful disposal of fridges are just the beginning for the ever-increasing number of Green people. Glasnost, the destruction of the Berlin wall and the release of Nelson Mandela reflect the growing calm and friendliness spreading across the Earth. In *Dyter-07*, the new caring, humanitarian world even goes as far as eliminating *all* weapons, conventional and nuclear — although secretly, underground, defence research continued.

Lucky that it did. Without the arms race, world economy was crippled and left the way wide open for some aliens to invade — they'd been ignored by the Earthlings until then (silly). The Special Action Committee was hurriedly set up to alleviate the 'problem', linking all computers not under alien control to form the 'Central Computer'. It's purpose was to find a solution to the desperate situation, and its answer was simply to re-establish the arms factories. This was done and new weapons were developed and produced.

But things went from bad to worse and from worse to Paul Daniels. The aliens captured the weapons systems while they were being delivered to base camps, and then proceeded to use them against their creators, devastating the world, destroying civilisation. There seemed no hope for the human race.

But deep underground, those who had continued producing weapons during the Earth's pacifist stage still live. And amongst them they have Dyter-07, a highly advanced fighter helicopter that represents the pinnacle of human defence technology. You are Commander Morell and must pilot Dyter-07 to strike a blow for humankind and hopefully return the rule of the Earth to man.

The combat chopper is flown over a horizontally scrolling landscape of islands and sea and you'll meet many types of vehicle, some created by man but all hostile and all deserving a dose of destruction from Dyter's cannon. A force shield allows six collisions before a life is lost and can be recharged by flying over a power force field or landing at base.

Special attention should be given to Walkers, which hold Earth scientists captive. A scientist released from a Walker can be picked up and dropped off at Dyter's base to give extra weapons: short shield (limited invulnerability), flame thrower, amphibian (Dyter can transform, jump on and dive under water), quadruple shot, powershield (protected from direct collisions) and missiles.



■ Peace is a dirty word on future Earth, the population's calm, peaceful nature leaving the world wide open for invasion. Here Dyter-07 has a hefty battletank to face — one of the very weapons designed to eliminate the invaders

These weapons can also be added to Battledroid, a vehicle carried by Dyter-07. When the copter is at ground level, you can explore an island's surface with the Battledroid and destroy all robots you find. Once all robots have been destroyed you can enter an alien control centre, situated in a volcano. The screen scrolls vertically as you make your way down, fighting off more enemies, until the bottom is reached and the levels' centre destroyed.

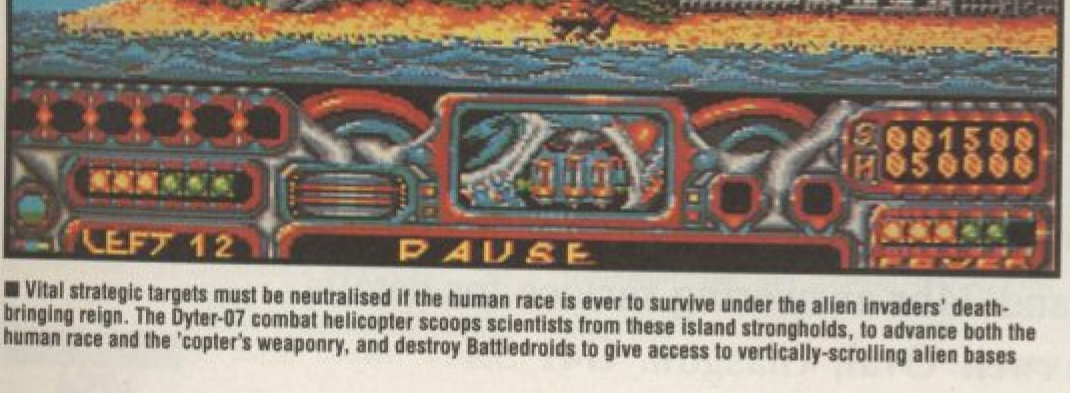
Okay, so the helicopter shoot-'em-up has been seen many a time before and the plot's rather naff and unnecessary (and dubiously translated from German). But *Dyter-07* is the kind of highly polished blaster we've come to expect from European programmers, and with professional presentation comes playability.

Rescuing men with a helicopter was a major element of Dan Gorlin's ancient classic, *Choplifter*, and those of us who remember that far back will know how fun that can be. *Dyter-07* is a 1990 remix, with increased ground-based action, courtesy of Battledroid, a smattering of add-on weapons and a vertical section to add variety.

With so many sprites flying round (98% of them on the aliens' side), it's far from easy but those helpful scientists, dishing out weapons, relieve some of the mayhem. There's some strategy involved in the 'using' of scientists, whether to 'spend them' on energy or copter or droid.

Blue Thunder? Airwolf? Who needs 'em: hop into the cockpit of Dyter-07!

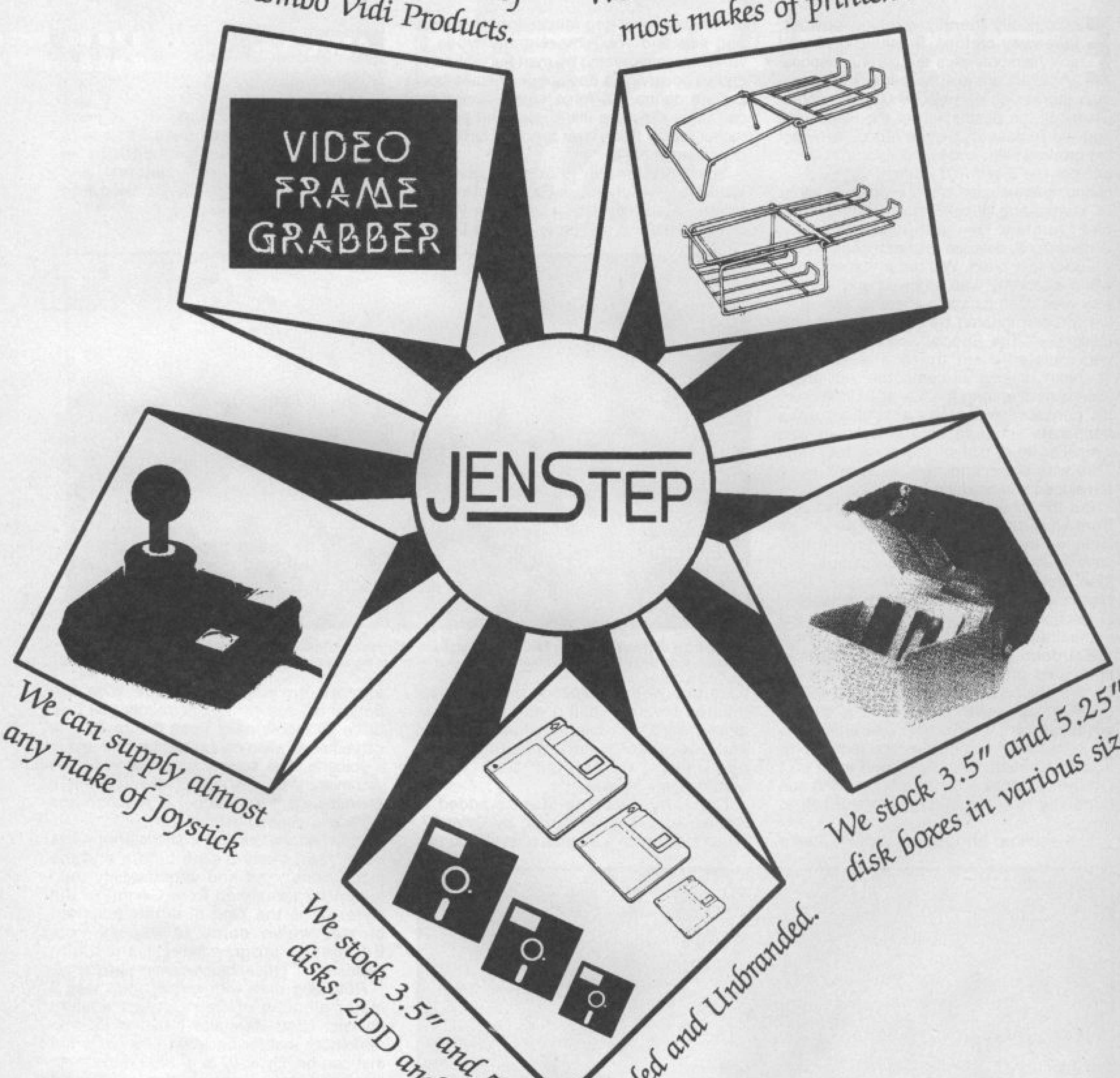
Warren Lapworth



■ Vital strategic targets must be neutralised if the human race is ever to survive under the alien invaders' death-bringing reign. The Dyter-07 combat helicopter scoops scientists from these island strongholds, to advance both the human race and the 'copter's weaponry, and destroy Battledroids to give access to vertically-scrolling alien bases

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VISA

On the first day Gremlin created mole — six years later there's

IMPOSSIMOLE

GREMLIN

GAME	**IMPOSSIMOLE**
PRODUCER	**GREMLIN**
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£19.99
ATARI ST	£19.99
C64	£9.99/£14.99
SPECTRUM	£9.99/£14.99
CPC	£9.99/£14.99

SPECTRUM 78%

For some reason Gremlin have decided to give Monty a facelift; not just adding a superhero cloak but putting him on a diet and giving him a cute snout and bulging eyes. He's animated very well and has a very pleasing humourous, cartoon-like air about him — a definite improvement over the old mole. Other characters in the game aren't quite as good, but backgrounds are detailed and colourful (although this does cause attribute problems in places).

It was a dark, dark night. So very dark, in fact, that even if you were wearing white gloves you'd still be hard pushed to see your hand in front of your face. It was also a hot, humid night and millionaire playboy Monty Mole was having difficulty sleeping. He'd already nipped downstairs 37 times to fetch glasses of lemonade but still couldn't cool down.

Giving up, he stood outside next to his swimming pool, a chlorine oasis on his private island, and luxuriated in the light breeze. Gazing into the black sky, he saw what he at first thought was a bright star. But then it moved across the sky and brightened further. It grew in apparent size... it was coming toward him.

Soon it was overhead. It was the size of a small branch of WH Smiths, but didn't stock as wide a range of magazines. Its blinding glow dimmed (lucky for Monty he was a mole, thus already had iffy eyesight and was largely unaffected by the light). Monty could then tell it was a flying saucer. Well, it was big, round and had a flashing neon sign saying 'Flying Saucer' on it, so it seemed a reasonable deduction.

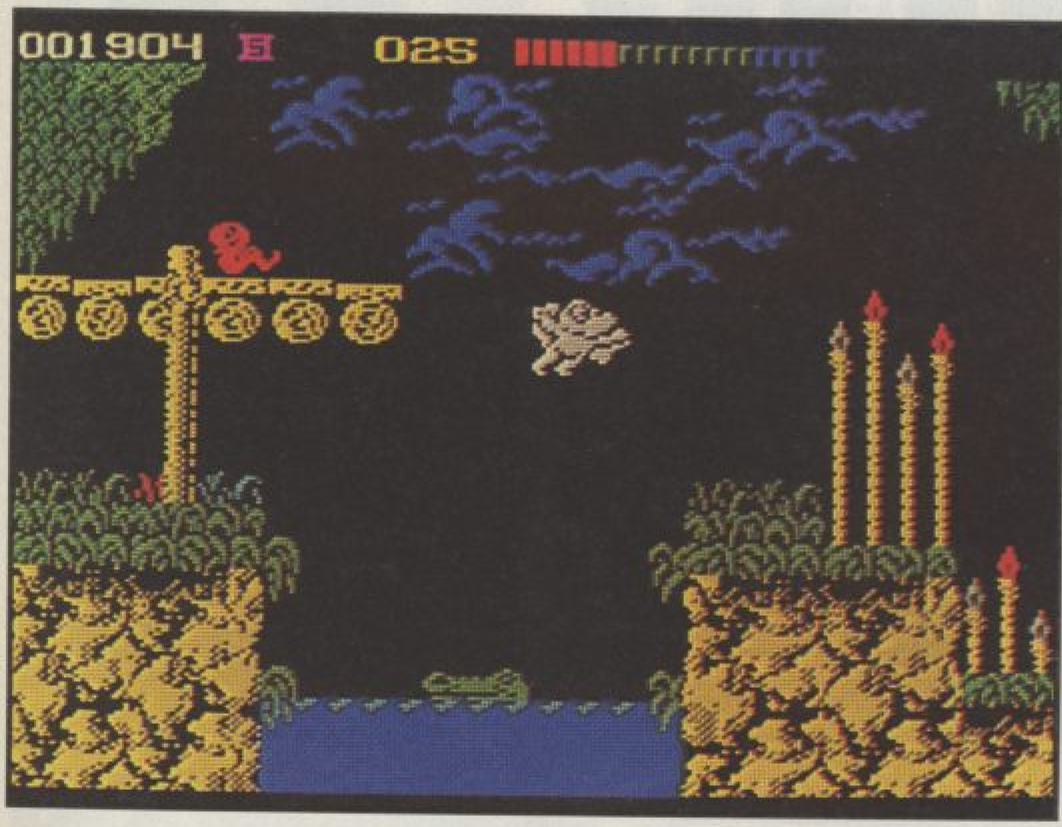
kicks. Stun gun. Bombs. Silly jumpsuit and cloak. In addition, there's money, jewels and handy items to collect.

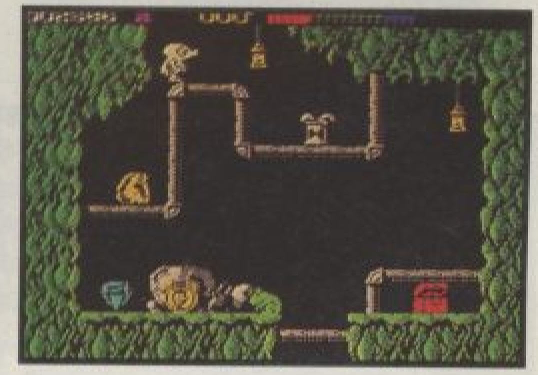
Monty has to bound through the Orient, a Klondike mine, an ice world and the Amazon jungle. He faces ninja, monkeys, polar bears, frogs and many other creatures on his travels.

If you've played other Monty games, many of the traps in his latest adventure will seem familiar. For instance, platform and ladder networks, bottomless pits, and harmful surfaces make an appearance. Worst of all are the guardians themselves (and no, they don't bombard the mole with typo errors). A dragon, giant worm, mutant ice-cream cone and tree monster all take some beating.

It's been a long time since Monty last made an appearance - but he's finally back. Perhaps it's just as well *Auf Wiedersehen, Monty*, the last mole platform game before this, was the worst of the series and a great disappointment after *Monty On The Run*. It makes *Impossimole* look very good.

The bad news is that *Impossimole* isn't as good as *Monty OTR*, but it does take you





A hatch opened in its side, ramp extended, and a seven-foot tall alien strode purposefully out... and fell into the swimming pool. He swam to the side (doing the butterfly stroke, in case you're interested) and dragged himself out. Brandishing a hefty-looking waterproof laser rifle, the alien, who bore a resemblance to a cross between Darth Vader and Metal Mickey with a hangover, convinced Monty (with use of said firearm) to go on a mission to rid the world of five extremely unpleasant guardians.

In the end, Monty didn't mind being forced into the mission because the aliens endowed him with super powers. Mega-

back to the good old days of simple yet highly playable platform and ladders games. Deft manoeuvres and pixel-perfect jumps are required, and its highly infuriating to just miss a ledge and plummet into danger. It's this that keeps you playing — you vow to get past each troublesome section, you won't let a simple jump beat you. The kicks and weaponry increase the action and, with the end-of-level guardians, variety and toughness of the game.

Although not an outstanding game, *Impossimole* is a fun game that's worth burrowing out.

Warren Lapworth



This story of the future begins way, way back in the past. When civilisation was still in its infancy, man already lived in fear. The cause of their fright was a three-headed beast called Morgul, a creature of fantastic but evil magical power. Yet man of old never even saw Morgul; it lived a solitary existence in its own kingdom, hardly ever venturing outside. But its disgusting thoughts from its foul mind leaked out. The filth seeped into humans' minds, developing unease and breeding fears (sounds to me as though you've been reading Fear too much - Ed).

Awake, people were paranoid and nervous of their fellow men.

They expected things to go wrong, disasters to happen. They were afraid of what might be hiding in shadows, what could be following them. They imagined things; saw things out of the corner of their eye, heard heavy footsteps.

But it was sleep they most feared. Sleep, the supposed refuge from all the rigours and worries of life. But also the realm of nightmares. It was almost impossible to determine the horrific dreams from real life. The creatures and events portrayed were so grisly, so horrifying, that tiredness - and the sleep and nightmares which would inevitably follow - were dreaded. People would endure sleepless and go to extremes to avoid slumber.

Just as the situation was getting desperate, people's lives falling apart from their irrational fears and hours without rest, a hero came. His name was Devolon and, with tremendous strength and bravery, he banished Morgul to another dimension, thus restoring calm and order to the human race.

For many centuries, man went busily on, safe in the knowledge that Morgul was gone forever. There were still troubles, still worries, wars, 'natural' disasters. Some still got scared; paranoid and fearful of the unknown. But that was put down to the increasing complications and stressful situations of advancing civilisation. It never occured to anyone that Morgul, trapped though he was, could still reach them.



■ Slanted platforms reminiscent of Ghouls 'N' Ghosts are the setting for the Alien level, acid drops, face huggers and giant maggots putting Turrican through his paces in horrific fashion

TURRICAN'S TOOLS

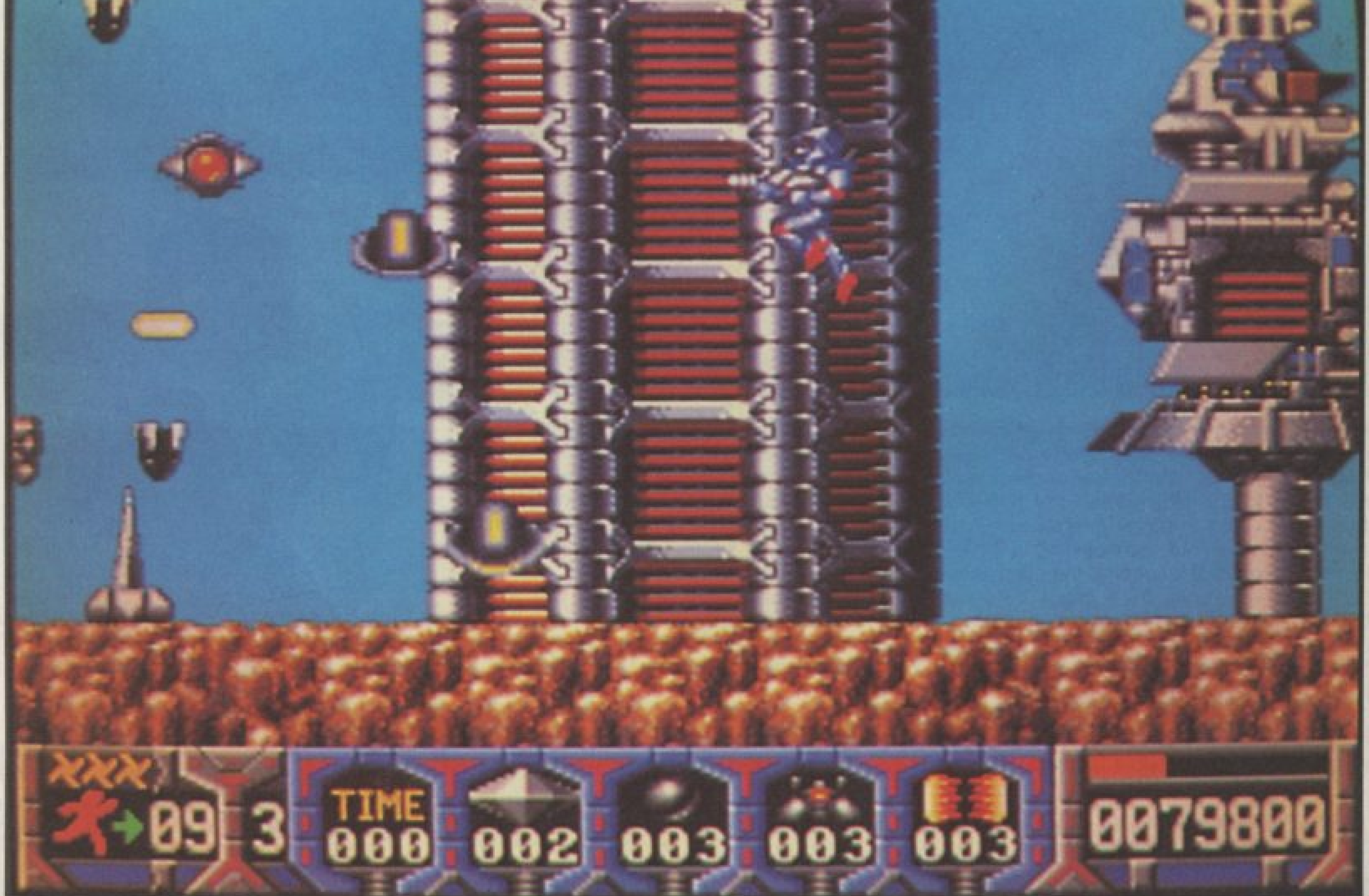
RED POD — activates three way shot. Upward and downward shots fire at 30 degrees until a second red pod is collected, when the angle changes to 45 degrees.
GREEN POD — gives laser. Collecting extra greens extends the laser.
BLUE POD — extends lightning beam.
LIGHT BLUE POD — activates force shield for limited period. During this time you're invulnerable and can damage enemies by touching them.
YELLOW 'P' — restores vitality.
WHITE 'G' — extra grenade.
WHITE 'M' — extra mine.
WHITE 'L' — extra energy line.
GREY '1-Up' — awards an extra life.
DIAMONDS — when 300 have been collected a continue-play is gained.

The nightmares began again... gradually increasing in frequency and ferocity. For a long time people didn't pay attention, and just shrugged them off. But they had to take note when everyone began suffering the grotesque nightmares and everyone lived in a state of perpetual tension. There came a point where people confined themselves to their homes. Too afraid of what might be waiting to attack them outside,

If anyone can

TURRICAN

RAINBOW ARTS





On a wing and a prayer, the armour clad hero bounds through maze-like chambers of a bleak futuristic complex, mechanical minions of Morgul running and fluttering toward him

GAME	TURRICAN
PRODUCER	RAINBOW ARTS
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£19.99
ATARI ST	£19.99
C64	£9.99/£14.99
SPECTRUM	£8.99/£12.99
CPC	£9.99/£14.99

they relied upon their computer terminals to order the goods required to keep them alive.

Morgul was back. And this time he was set to dominate the entire world and its population.

Only one man was immune to the three-headed beast's powers, only one could shrug off the images it created, images which were gradually solidifying, becoming real. He was — he is — Turrican. An international bounty hunter, a vigilante, a mercenary. Turrican's reputation as an skilled marksman, athlete and overall super-soldier is second-to-none. Only he can defeat Morgul's many minions and then face and destroy the master of nightmares itself.

You are Turrican, of course, and have Morgul's realms and all that inhabit them ahead of you. Shiny metal armour covers your entire body and protects you from most normal dangers. However, Morgul's creations are far from ordinary, and collisions with them or their weaponry will wear down the armour's vitality (energy). When it reaches zero or if the level's time limit expires, one of an initial three lives is lost

Despite the hefty armour, you can leap high into the air and even influence jump direction in mid-air. Jumping also allows you to take aim at adversaries otherwise out of your rifle's firing line. Your weapons pack also has lightning flash capabilities. Holding down fire activates the deadly lightning beam which may be rotated to any direction.

ALL TYPES OF KATAKIS PROBLEMS

Manfred Trenz and Factor 5 first hit the headlines with *Katakis*, a horizontal blaster which bore a marked resemblance to Irem's R-TypeXKatakis because of its similarities to R-Type. Ironically, Activision commisioned Rainbow Arts to re-program some of their *R-Type* conversions shortly afterwards. Sadly the C64 version didn't live up to the classy *Katakis*. Later Activision allowed Rainbow Arts to release *Katakis* under the new title of *Denaris*, with certain cosmetic changes made so that it wasn't too close to *R-Type*. *Denaris* didn't live up to the original version, but gained a commendable 83% on the Amiga and 87% on the C64 in TGM017.

You also have the curious ability to shrink down and transform into a gyroscope; this can be done three times per life. You can't jump while in this form, but you're invincible and damage anything you run into.

Also on your person are a limited quantity of grenades, mines and energy lines. The former is self-explanatory. Mines are really time bombs, exploding after a short time to destroy all land-based enemies. Energy lines extend to the height of the screen and fire in pairs - one going left, the other right.

Naturally there are extra weapons and useful items to be collected at irregular intervals - most in the form of coloured pods (see box). The pods prove useful, and sometimes essential. In addition to common enemies of varied resilience, there are larger mid- and end-of-level monsters. The latter breed include a gauntletted fist and a mutant piranha! And then there's a certain tri-headed warlock-beast of fantastic strength and awesome power, known as Morgul...

Rainbow Arts really know how to produce top-notch arcade games. Turrican follows (relatively) hot on the heels of that great underwater blaster, X-Out (reviewed in TGM027 — C64 version elsewhere in this issue). Designed and programmed by Manfred Trenz (see programmer profile) and Holger Schmidt of Factor 5, the people who brought you Katakis/Denaris (C64 and Amiga respectfully), it's little surprise that this is another highly professional and playable game.

Although thankfully not too close to coin-op copyright as Katakis, Turrican looks and plays like an accurate conversion of a sophisticated arcade game. The many different weapons readily at hand allow fighting tactics to be varied. The gyroscope mode is a curious but original idea and proves very useful — its small dimensions allow you to enter some otherwise inaccessible corridors.

My favourite weapon is the lightning bolt. It has the greatest screen presence and is most fun to use. It allows enemies above or below you to be killed without you having to enter their firing line — very useful. It's perfect for probing different areas for destructible pieces of scenery.

Although the various pods you can collect don't drastically enhance capabilities, they can be a Godsend. 300 diamonds seems like a hell of a lot to collect for a continue play, but you often find many of them grouped together.

Turrican is tough! 1300 screens, 13 levels, five completely different worlds, many diverse Morgul minions, mean end-of-level guardians... The game offers shoot-'em-up action in a platform game mold (one which requires some very deft manoeuvres), mixed with excellent graphics and wide weaponry selection. Turrican is a Nineties arcade game not to be missed.

Warren Lapworth

C64 94%

The legs on the Turrican sprite are on the short side, but otherwise it looks very good. The animation is excellent too. Deft shading is used for some of the background graphics giving a sleek, futuristic feel. At the other end of the scale, the Alien level is very dingey and foreboding - but again with equally good use of colour and form. Graphical niceties include thunder and lightning, bubbles, and splash water effects. Scrolling, sometimes in parallax, is very smooth. Sound effects are energetic, music dramatic, and gameplay addictive. A classic C64 game.

AMIGA 92%

Unfortunately not a great improvement over the C64, Turrican being a good but far from outstanding sprite. Shading is grainy in places. Backgrounds are generally effective and scroll smoothly. Although end-of-level monsters are the stars of the show — big, threatening and nice to look at — the shading on floating mines is excellent; very realistic indeed. Energetic music and atmospheric sound effects add much to the game. The lightning bolt buzz being one of the most cinematic sounds I've heard in a computer game. Although not a particularly impressive Amiga game, it is the best pure arcade blast released for the 16-bit Commodore so far this year.

16—24—36 hut, hut, hut

CYBERBALL

TENGEN/DOMARK

The year is 2022, the last human player in the great game of Gridiron Football has just 'retired' (actually he was decapitated by a face-masking violation). Now huge robots 20 feet tall, 8 feet wide and 2000 pounds in weight (about the same as two dozen human players) carry on the tradition in a game noted for its violence and fast paced action.

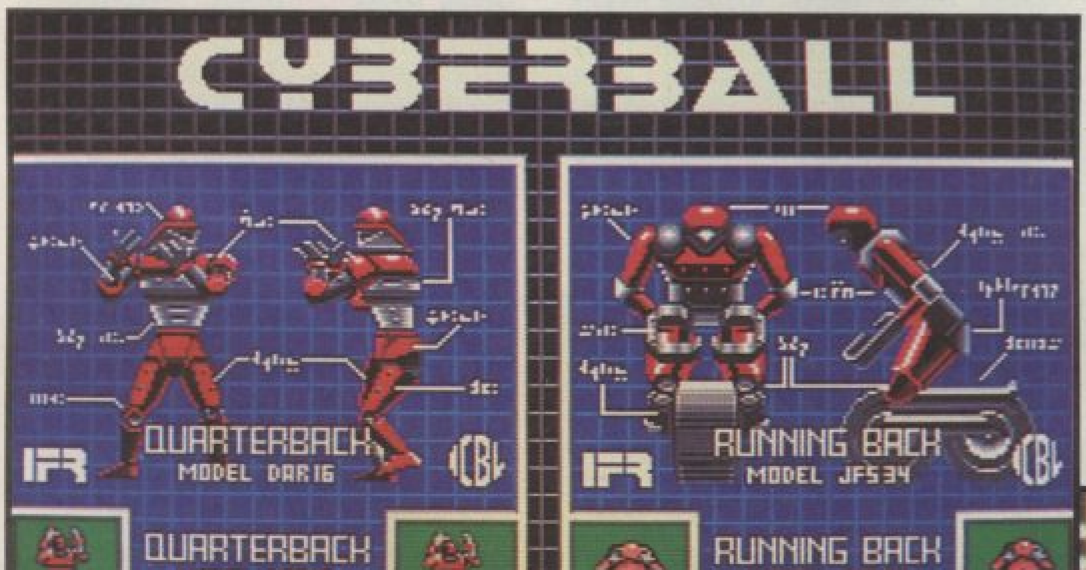
After choosing a one or two player game, you get to select your team. In practice mode you play either the Los Angeles Assassins or New York Enforcers. Or, if you are a hard dude withan attitude problem, go for Pro mode. The San Francisco Hitmen, Chicago Killers, Miami Terminators and Dallas Destroyers are the monster robots on offer.

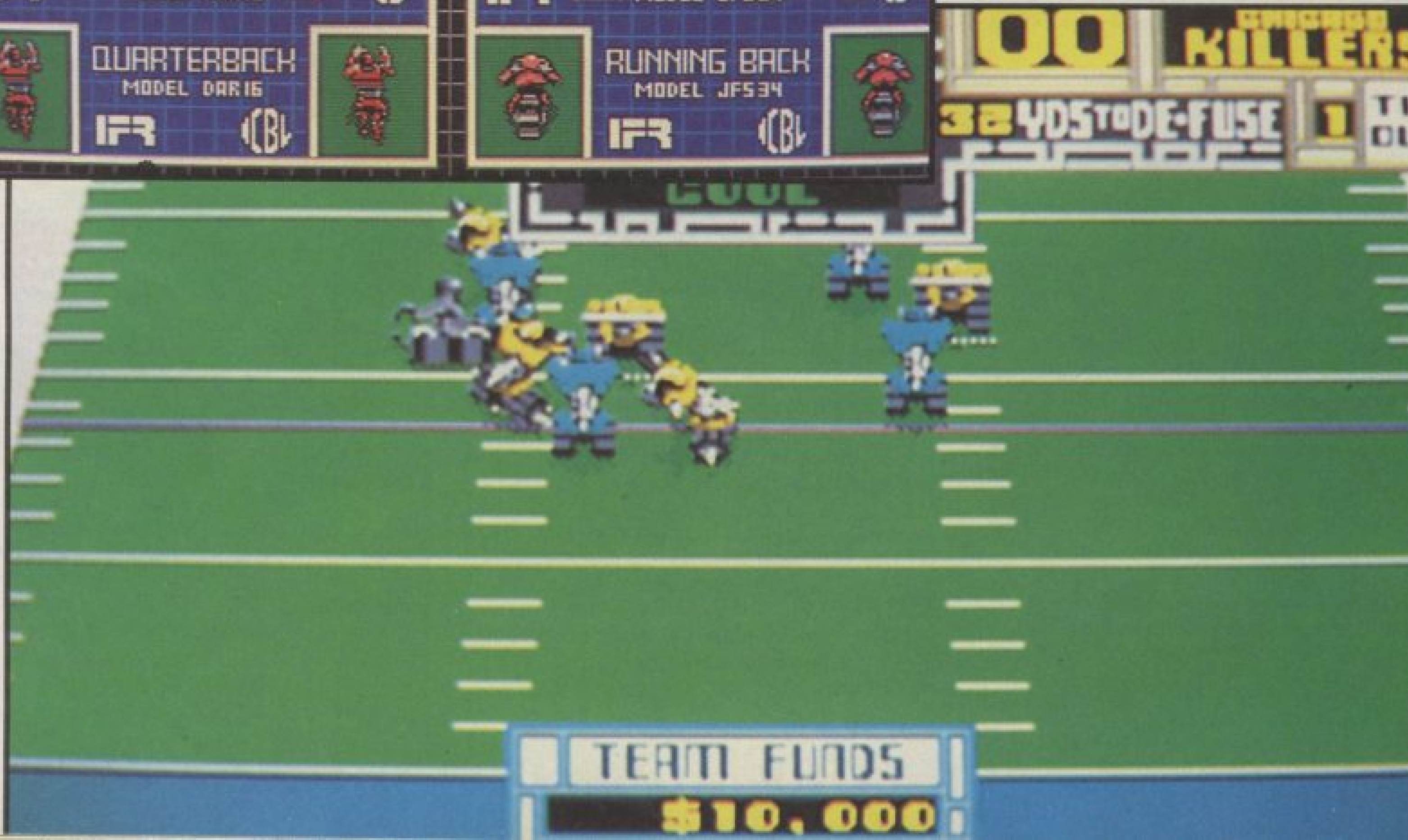
The ball appears on the pitch (along with the combatants) and the battle begins. You generally start the game by receiving the ball, thus you are on the offensive. The ball used in American Football circles is often nicknamed a bomb, well here the description is literally true. 350 pounds of steel and high explosives have gone into this swine, and as the game progresses the ball gets closer to exploding. The general rules of American football apply: score a touch—down by carrying the ball across the end zone.

The ball starts off cool, becomes warm, then hot, and finally white hot. A nasty trick to pull with a critical ball is to throw it at an opposing player (it blows them up, hah). But I'm

getting well ahead of myself. When on the offensive, you are faced with a choice of either running or passing plays. When an offensive choice has been made, you can select one of four formations. The formations include the exotically-named Sweetness, Can—O—Corn, Razzle—Dazzle and Snakedance. Each formation has particular strategic values, so if you have some prior knowledge of the game this helps.

A limited amount of attempts are allowed to reach the defuse line - that is, before the ball blows. If you fail, you go on the defensive. Here you have the choice to run a short, medium or long defence. Like the offensive formations, the defensive formations have some wonderful names: Nickle, Blitz, LB Blitz, Standard Run, 3—4 Blitz.





GAME **CYBERBALL**	
PRODUCER **TENGEN/DOMARK**	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£19.99
ATARI ST	£19.99
PC	£24.99
C64	£9.99/£14.99
SPECTRUM	£9.99/£14.99
CPC	£9.99/£14.99

AMIGA 87%

It's handy if you have knowledge of the sport before you start. You can, like me, just pick the offensive and defensive plays willy nilly — but if you understand the strategic element of each play you have an advantage. *Cyberball* kicks off with a well 'ard title tune and some impressive speech (I'd love to meet the woman behind that sexy voice) (yes, but I bet she wouldn't say the same about you - Ed). Sadly in—game audio is limited to muffled speech and sound effects. I'd at least have liked to hear the gruff voice of the Quarterback calling the play (as heard in the coin—op game). Graphically the game is good, with the robots looking very menacing. American Footy fans and action freaks alike should take a look at *Cyberball*. Aaagh, no don't throw the ball to me...

Cyberball is split into six three minute periods in which you score as many touch—downs as possible. So there you have it; cause as much damage as possible to the opposition and collect as much money as possible (by scoring touch downs) to buy replacement robots.

Mark Caswell

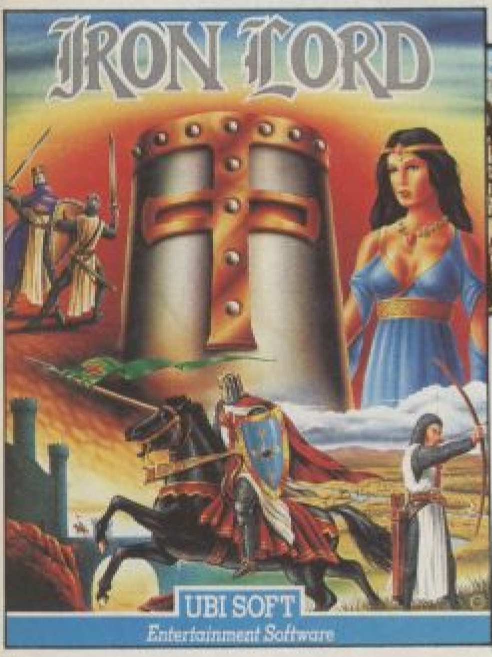
With **UBI SOFT**

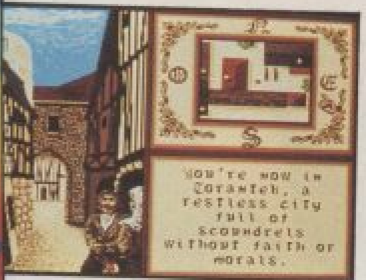
Entertainment Software

BRING OUT THE CHAMPION IN YOU!

ADVENTURE

- ☐ Atari ST
- ☐ Amiga
- ☐ C64 Disc
- ☐ Amstrad Disc
- ☐ IBM
- ☐ Spectrum Disc and Cassette





You are alone... a single warrior in a country of traitors, spies and assassins. You are unknown... the forgotten son of the dethroned king. Can you recover the throne ? Only a true Crusader of Justice could succeed at such a feat. Deceit and treachery abound !

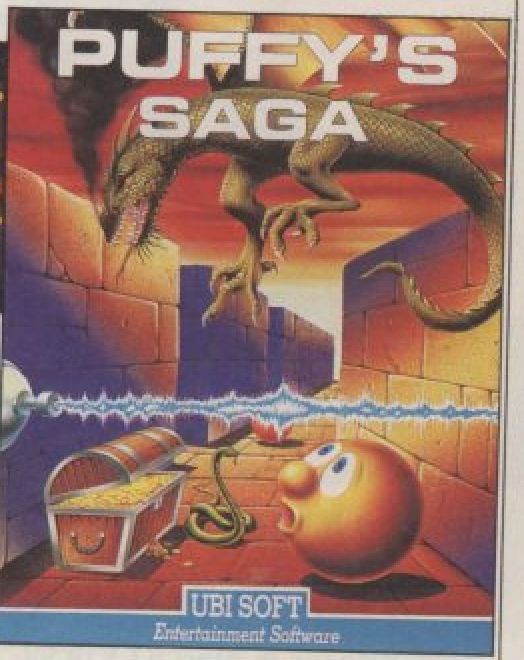
Prove your birthright trough strategy and strength. Amaze the town with your superior archery, arm-wresling, sword-play, and dice-throwing skills. Ultimately, you must build a following that not only respects you, but will go to war for you !

Take charge. Prove you are IRON LORD - The Crusader of Justice !
You owe it to your homeland. Your father, and most of all, to the future of your kingdom !

ACTION

- ☐ Atari ST
- ☐ Amiga
- ☐ C64 Disc and Cassette
- ☐ Amstrad Disc and Cassette





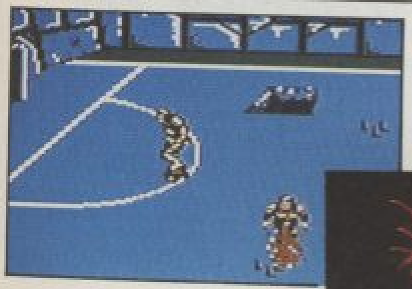
"DON'T GET PUFFED OUT...

That's the challenge in this addictive arcade-style game.

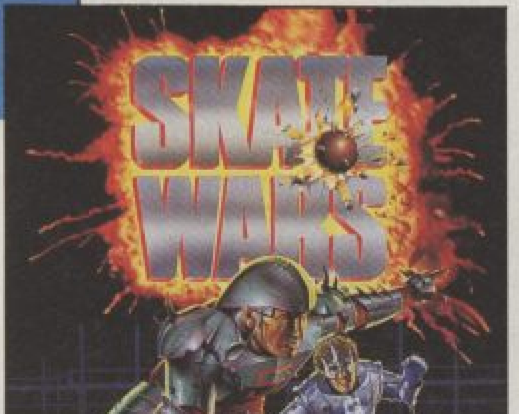
- **Avoid the enemies...** Ghosts, Acid Puddles, Flying Dragons, and Snakes lurk around each corner.
- **Choose your character** : Puffy is powerful, but Puffyn has speed !
- **Explore twenty different levels** and settings, each offering passageways filled with demons.
- **Race through the mazes** quickly or accumulate points by each level in full.
- **Enjoy** the colorful graphics and entertaining sound effects.

SPORTS...

- ☐ Atari ST
- ☐ Amiga
- ☐ C64 Disc and Cassette *
- ☐ Amstrad Disc and Cassette
- ☐ Spectrum Disc and Cassette

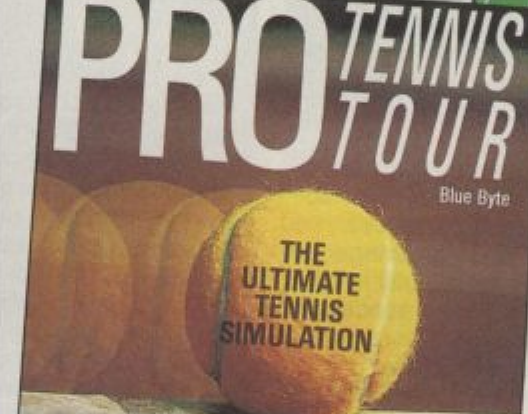


- ☐ Atari ST
- ☐ C64 Disc
- ☐ Amstrad Disc and Cassette



Skate Wars the sport of the future, combines the skills of soccer with the thrills of Rollerball, played in a space age ice stadium ! Lead your team to victory through a series of deadly hazards : crevasses, ramps, jumps, all while competing against the ruthless tactics of your opponents. You'll have to play dirty to win. Maim, trip, push, and shove... show no mercy. Only the brave win, or even survive !

Screen shots represent Commodore 64 and Amiga versions : others may vary Amiga is a registered trademark of Commodore/Amiga. Inc.





Compete against your friends, even if they aren't internationally ranked ! Amaze the grandstand with an instant replay in 3-D animation. More than 300 animations with zoom effects.

Warm up on one of six practice programs containing three levels of increasing difficulty. Put away shots like a Pro ! Master back-hand volleys, passing-shots, and other winning tennis strokes.

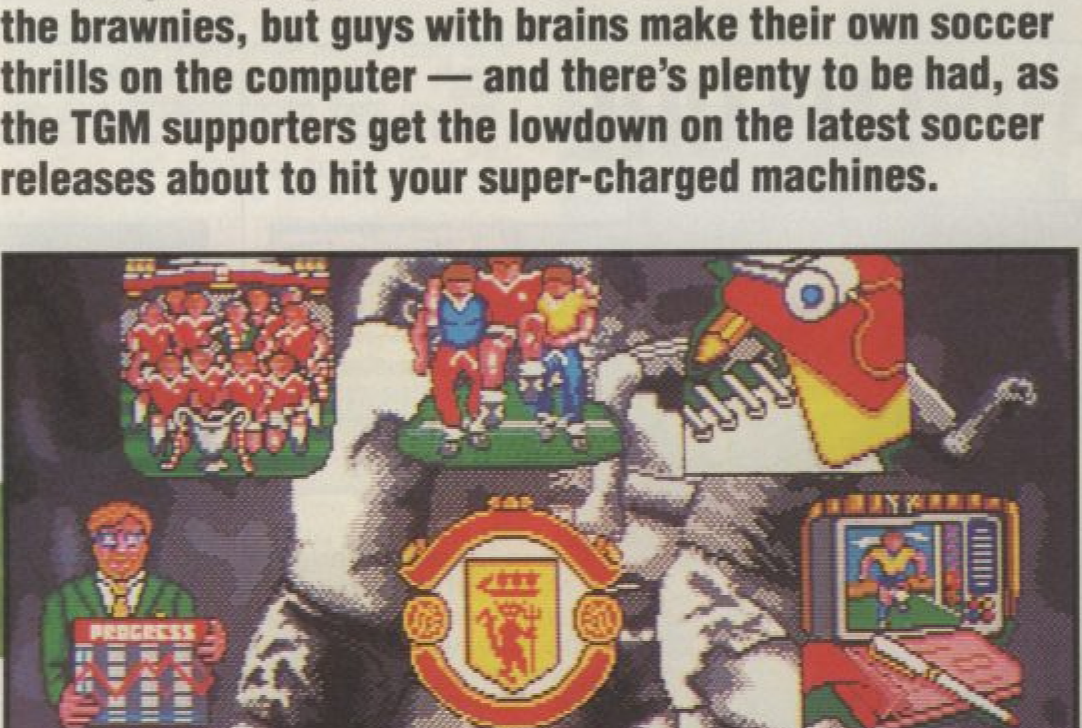
Rush the net with confidence, knowing you can strategically place your next return.
Feel the excitement build as you challenge your next opponent and make your way to the top !

Travel around the world and play at four international tournaments.
Test your abilities on grass, clay or cements courts.



SATURDAY N

It's the big night in the armchair for the OAPs and a lustycheering mindless freak-out on the terraces for the brawnies, but guys with brains make their own soccer thrills on the computer — and there's plenty to be had, as the TGM supporters get the lowdown on the latest soccer releases about to hit your super-charged machines.



Fans of the club will rave, but the title screen's one of the best things in it for armchair soccer fans

MANCHESTER UNITED

Krisalis ■ Atari ST £19.99 ■ Amiga £24.99

An options screen presents seven icons. Team Squad displays attributes of active players, while Players Injured lists inactive ones and the number of weeks they'll be out of action. Players Suspended is where naughties end up and simply shows the names and number of weeks their ban remains in force.

To buy a player from Transfers you either pay the asking price for a player, bearing in mind his skill level, or make a bid and hope another club doesn't top it. Selling a player is a matter of highlighting the player's name in your squad list and then accepting or rejecting bids made for him. Training can be used to hone different skills of players, up to four different skills practised in one week, and Progress Chart simply plots results. Disk Options not only allows statistics to be saved part way through a season, but also allows certain parameters to be altered: match time; language; name of manager; control keys; player names; difficulty level; and game type from full management to pure arcade.

Matches are shown from the time-honoured side view from the stands. Players currently under control are highlighted by crosshairs at their feet and a transparent 'radar' display (which can be put positions.

The options screen has an unattractive mono, stipple-shaded background and icons lack colour, although most are animated. In matches the pitch is a boring stripey mass of unsmooth scrolling. The radar is almost square and too small — there's not enough room for the player markers to mill around. Sprites, with unattractive blocky black outlines, are slow in animation. On the Amiga slight changes of definition and colouring make it mildly more appealing and music/effects are more sophisticated.

There isn't much wrong with *Manchester United*, except that it's all so ordinary. With gameplay lacking excitement and involvement, it's probably enjoyable for United fans, but others should shop around first.

78% **Warren Lapworth**

A GREAT TEAM...

Manchester United began in 1878 as Newton Heath FC, a group of railway workers led by the Doughty brothers who played during their lunch time. Their pitch belonged to a church who wouldn't allow them to charge spectators; fund-raiding activities were organised. A business man, JH Davis, admired their determination and in 1902 set up a consortium to handle their finances. It was then they were renamed Manchester United FC.

Five years later they won the League, thanks to star player (where have I heard that before?) Billy Meredith, and won the FA Cup in the following season. 1910 saw the building of their new ground, Old Trafford Stadium, built next to the Manchester Ship Canal for the sum of £60,000.

Success was lacking until the famous Matt Busby took the reigns and built up a formidable squad. United won the league in 1956 and 1957, reaching the FA Cup final and European Cup semi-final. Disaster struck on the way to the next year's European Cup final, the team's plane crashing and killing several of the team. Under Busby's leadership they overcame it and later signed up George Best.

United suffered another difficult patch when Busby stood down but again found their feet, winning the League and reaching Cup finals on numerous occasions under different managers. Alex Ferguson is the latest leader, himself a success story from Aberdeen, who has made great changes in the team to compensate for the departure of players.

Manchester United, the game, is far less dramatic.

NTE SPECIAL

PLAYER MANAGER

ANCO ■ AMIGA £19.95 ■ ATARI ST £19.95

TGM STAR PLAYER

Being the manager of a football club is a stressful occupation — it's easy to get laryngitis screaming at dozing players. Some enraged bosses even make regular pitch invasions. You're one such boss, but unlike Cloughie, your place on the pitch is entirely legitimate. As player manager of a Third Division side you can inspire your team to victory by playing alongside them. Do well and you could gain promotion or even win the FA Cup; do badly and the club's board of directors soon let you know!

If you're starting your very first season, the computer takes a few minutes creating a unique game environment of teams and players which is saved onto a blank disk (also used for saved game positions).

Management menus give a wide range of options for tactical assessment and operational control, including the common requirements of players' physical abilities and skill attributes, selling and buying players right down to the price haggle (unhappy players may request a transfer), club records, finances, managerial assessment and the season's fixture list. The Tactics option helps create (and save) new team formations using a map of the pitch, where you determine the target position of each player when the ball is in any of 12 sectors, as well as for goal kicks and corners. The Ray Trace facility usefully



shows how far players have to run as the ball moves from sector to sector.

Under Coach the three types of training are: Squad Training for retraining players in alternative positions; Tactical Training to modify one of the team's four formations or replace it with one previously designed in the Tactics option; and Extra Training simply improves the squad's performance, but if overused can lead to low morale.

Time for the big match. After viewing the opposition's squad, you can pick your team. To substitutes and 11 players are selected plus starting formation.

The match itself is a slightly altered version of Dino Dini's arcade footy game, *Kick Off*, with the action taking place on an overhead scrolling pitch. If you're in the selected team, you get to play either in your chosen position or for the whole team, flicking from player to player as they get closest to the ball — this choice can only be made when you start a new game of *Player Manager*. Either of your two subs can be put on at any time, and a change of tactics made simultaneously. If you're in a hurry, you can play an accelerated version of the match (with a static pitch and dots for players) or just get the final result.

I'm overjoyed to say that *Player Manager* has been well worth the anxious months of waiting. The mixture of management and arcade games works so well that the burden of keeping your finances in the black and spotting the right players to bring in and who to sack (via in-depth profiles) is very realistic. Management menus are easy to use, neatly presented, and the great coaching and tactics options really pay dividends on the pitch.The match action is an improvement on *Kick Off* with cleverer computer players making for a more skilful game — especially when you're playing in one position.

Players behave just like their real life counterparts, even their private lives can interfere with their career: they can get arrested on drugs charges! The board of directors stop you buying a player if they think he's too expensive, and sack you if the team performs badly.

The core *Kick Off* game is sadly lacking a two-player mode, but compensates with a role-playing option where you control just one player risking injury and sending offs. Football fans will find this an absolutely essential purchase, but anyone else who appreciates a great arcade game and an in-depth strategy game should enjoy it just as much. And with the long term interest offered by league and cup competitions you'll never want to hang up your boots.

90% **Phil King**

COMING SOON...



Liverpool FC

Not to be confused with *Liverpool* from Grandslam, *Liverpool FC* is the first footy game Ocean have released since the great *Matchday II*. So now you can emulate Ian Rush and Kenny Dalglish on the pitch or tackle the more serious management side. Judging by screen shots, this will be a real corker.

Super League Manager

And following on from the 16-Bit versions of *Emlyn Hughes International Soccer*, *Super League Manager* from Audiogenic is on the cards for Easter release. You play manager of a small fourth division club working your way up to the top by buying and selling players — and playing matches. As with most strategy games, it contains only descriptions of games and no graphical details. But if you own a copy of *Emlyn Hughes International Soccer* you can link the two games and take part in matches. The rewards for success are high, but fail and you will be fired.

International Soccer Challenge

Once billed as *World Cup*, *International Soccer Challenge* is a late spring release on MicroStyle. Successor to *MicroProse Soccer*, great things are expected. We're



promised solid 3D perspective, with filled polygons for pitch and stadium, and the game, it is claimed, contains a high degree of computer intelligence. Out first on the ST, with Amiga, PC and C64 to follow.

World Cup Soccer '90

Not to be left out, Virgin announce the imminent arrival of another action-packed game, with features to include close up views of goals, free kicks, goal kicks, corner kicks and throw ins. You're on a team qualifying for the honour of winning the prestigious gold trophy. And it isn't that easy because the skill level increases with each round played. Due in May, *World Cup Soccer '90* will be available in 8- and 16-bit at the usual prices.



EMLYN HUGHES INTERNATIONAL SOCCER
Audiogenic ■ Atari ST

'Eeerrrrhhh!! Come on teeeeam!'
What a shame Emlyn 'Crazy Horse' Hughes isn't one of the captains on *A Question Of Sport* any more. What a lad he is, what a card...

'You're absolutely right, Brian, he's an extraordinary player. Quite remarkable. In fact, he's a man of two halves... errr, well, over to you...'

He really injected a sense of fun into the programme. Even if he did lose most weeks...

Emlyn's football computer game, which first appeared on the Commodore 64, has a literal wealth, nay, plethora of options, all accessed from pull-down menus. Skill level, backheels, automatic goalies, graphics' colour, fixtures, tables, names, individual player skills... the list goes on (and on). Best of all is the number of kicks you can use. Five different directions, three different heights and variable strength for all 15 combinations.

The original C64's option screen's the same: blank white and blue menu text — a nice, clean, professional look in 8-bit, it's too minimal for an ST. The pitch, straightforward looking, scrolls well, and pleasant but hardly staggering sprites move neatly. Sound's a lively tune and a number of highly amusing crowd sounds add a good atmosphere.

The amount of options is fantastic and the number of kicks at hand unrivalled. It takes an age to become accustomed to the different directions and heights of kicks, and longer still to master them. But patience has its rewards — the amount of control you can have over the ball is brilliant.

86 % **Warren Lapworth**

ITALIA 1990
Code Masters ■ Amiga £4.99 ■ Atari ST £4.99

There's little to choose between the ST and Amiga versions — port-across conversions strike again.

Cashing in on the fiver-a-throw 16-bit games and World Cup trends, Code Masters' footy special includes an individually-loaded training section. Solitary or versus another player, indoor exercises include press-ups, bar and weight lifts, squat thrusts and sit-ups. Outdoor exercises are sprinting, ball control (slalom between cones) and penalties, both as shooter and keeper.

Set match length and auto or manual goalies then enter a knockout competition against the computer or a second player; alternatively, enter a league with two or three others to decide who reaches the semi-finals.

Though not packed with detail, indoor training is good to look at (if you excuse the sprites' pallid faces; and also their long exaggerated steps, otherwise football match sprites are clear and well animated too). The training section is hardly ground-breaking, but more than you get on many football games. However, you can't save training scores/times to load into the match program and adjust team performance, which would've involved you in the game more.

The matches themselves are run-of-the-mill and fail to generate excitement. It's good value for those not especially interested in football but like the occasional kickabout.

77% **Warren Lapworth**

PSYCHO SOCCER
LocoSoft ■ Amiga £19.99

Strictly speaking, this isn't a football game. True, the basic aim is to run up and down a pitch and score as many goals as possible (preferably in the right net). However, the real aim is to win no matter what cost. There's no ref. The pitch is littered with pits, barbed wire, mines, electrified wires and other pleasant obstacles. Weapons — guns, knives, hammers, whips and so forth — can be picked up and used to maim or kill opposing players.

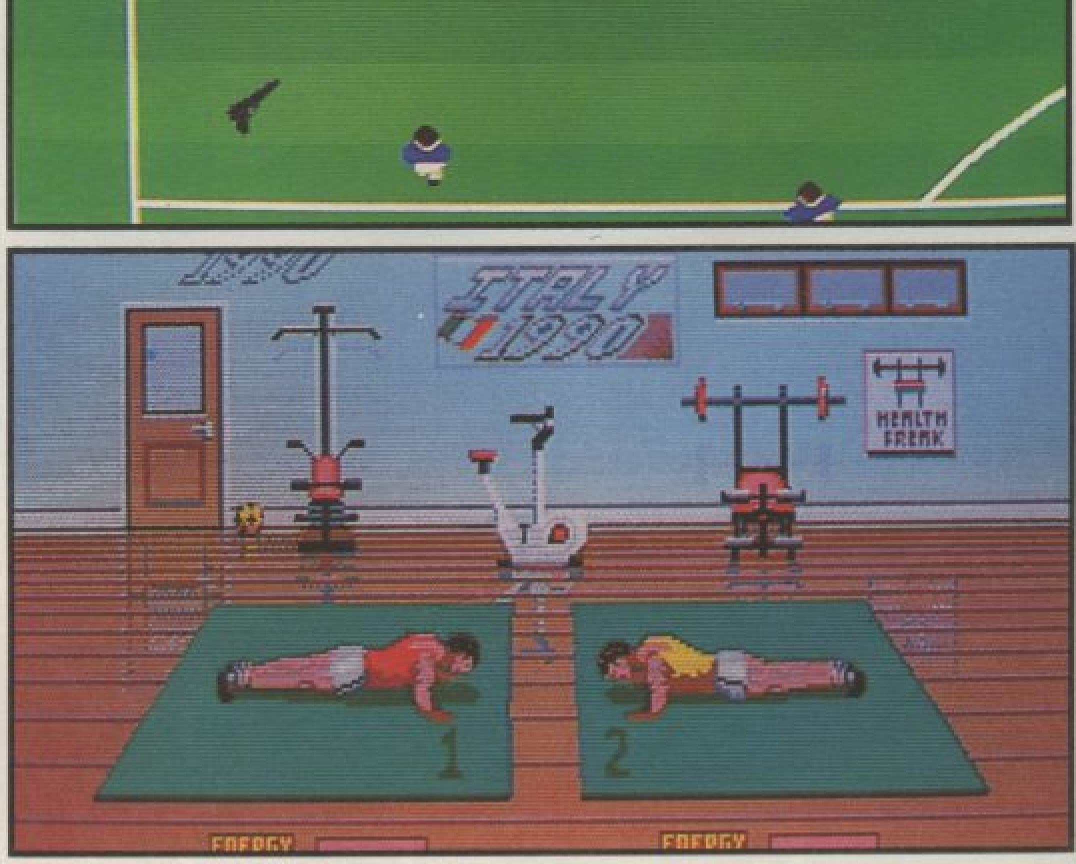
The sprites are colourful and realistically animated on a plan view of the pitch, which scrolls smoothly and swiftly in all directions. A status panel details the player's under control with portraits, weapons used, number of deaths, and time and score text. Messages like 'Bonus points for decapitation' occasionally scroll by in the panel.

A lively synth-pop tune introduces the game while in-game sound effects are suitably OTT screams, grunts and explosions.

Psycho Soccer is a fast, all-action game that tends to eschew goal-scoring elements in favour of bloody violence. It's much more fun to sprint around dodging traps and attacking players, particularly in two-player mode, than to piffle around with measly goals! A high death count is what makes the game a goody. It all gets a bit samey after a few games, though, and the ball control system is a mite awkward. An unusual, exciting product — but one where the novelty doesn't quite last long enough.

86% **Warren Lapworth**



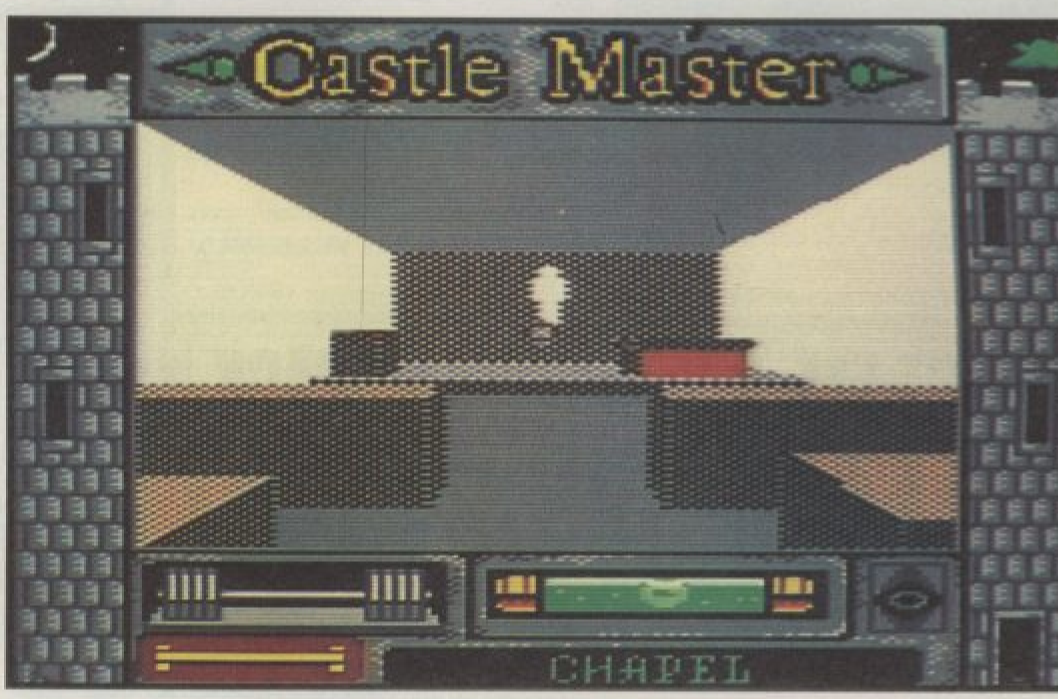


Ludlow Castle in game shock!

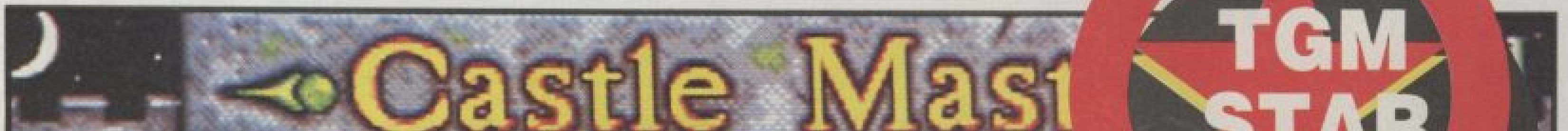
CASTLE M

Built on the burial ground of Magister, the master of dark magic and dirty deeds, over the years Castle Eternity has become a place feared and reviled by the locals. But now you must enter its dank walls, for it is where your twin has been grabbed and taken to a high tower. The first task in *Castle Master* is to decide your sex, dependent on your choice the other character will be carried up to the tower to await rescue.

You start at the foot of the drawbridge, armed only with a supply of rocks and courage. The first task is to enter the castle. This is achieved by lobbing a rock at the trigger point just to the left of the drawbridge. Once inside you are faced with the courtyard and the four towers that must be explored (along with the caverns beneath the castle) to find your kin. As with all the other Freescape titles your surroundings are viewed through the character's eyes, with the borders of the screen holding relevant displays.



■ Nope, there's no spirits in here. Our intrepid Prince/Princess enters one of the Freescaped rooms. With full strength and no keys in your belt you must explore the Chapel and discover the clues that will lead you to your twin. It's a good thing the vicar isn't here to see the damage you are doing (above). Out in the wilderness you contemplate the challenge that is ahead of you. The first problem is how to lower the drawbridge... well seeing as you have read this far, to lower the bridge you must hit the trigger point with a rock. (below)



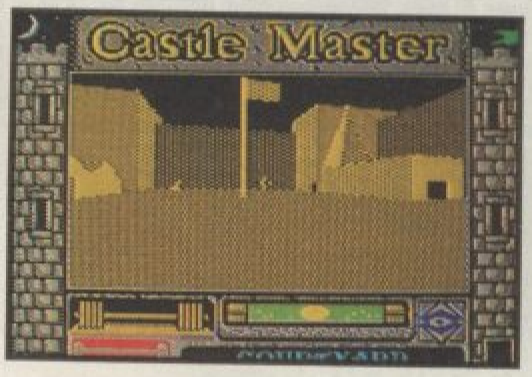
MASTER

INCENTIVE/DOMARK

GAME	**CASTLE MASTER**
PRODUCER	**INCENTIVE/DOMARK**
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£24.99
C64	£9.99/£14.99
SPECTRUM	£9.99/£14.99
CPC	£9.99/£14.99



■ In the banquetting hall the hero of our tale is attacked by a large flying ghostie. Lob a rock at it to drive it away ('cos as it's dead you can't kill it), but watch the energy level (above). In the courtyard the choice is a difficult one, do you go first to the stables, the chapel, or even the tower. One thing is for certain, you won't get anywhere staring at the flagpole (right).



The bottom of the screen shows your character's strength (this is kept up by eating food) and a rack upon which keys are hung (these are needed to get through locked doors). A spirit level shows how many spooks are around (the higher the level the lower your chances of survival) and a message window keeps you in touch with your surroundings. There are three modes of movement: crawl, walk and run. These are accessed by clicking the pointer on the relevant window to the left of the screen. As you move around, exploring the castle, objects may present themselves for collection. Food (in the guise of cheese), keys, gems, etc can either help or hinder you. Let's face it, though, you'll need all the help you can get.

Mark Caswell



AMIGA 92%

They've done it again, Incentive claim that *Castle Master* has been over a year in development, and it shows. Some of the earlier Incentive offerings were sluggish in movement, *Castle Master* on the other hand fair whizzes around. The graphical detail is, as always, faultless. The title tune is a hauntingly atmospheric piece that sets the scene perfectly. Although, you do have the choice to swap the in-game tune with the sound effects that are just as good. In short, fans of *Driller*, *Dark Side* and *Total Eclipse* will love this.

ATARI ST 92%

Castle Master is as good-looking and fast as its 16-bit cousin. The puzzles are tough, and even fans will be stumped for a while. But with a bit of patience you will be able to move deeper into the maze of rooms.

C64 90%

The 64 version is just as atmospheric as the 16-bit games, perhaps more so because shading has been put to good use (making the 'solid' objects look even more so). The layout on the 8-bit games is slightly different to the Amiga and ST, because they were written by different people. My only slight moan is the sluggish 64 speed. Ho hum.

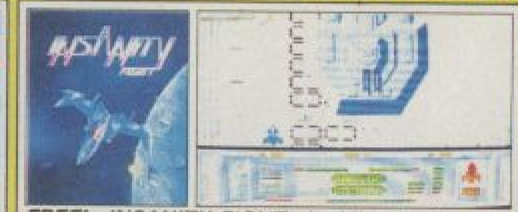
SPECTRUM 90%

Monochrome graphics which don't detract from the fact that the game is particularly baffling. As with the 64 version, the keyboard layout is at first a bit confusing, but once mastered, movement is easy (there is a joystick option). Sound's pretty good too. What is there to say: buy it!

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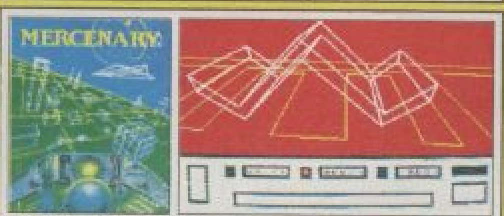
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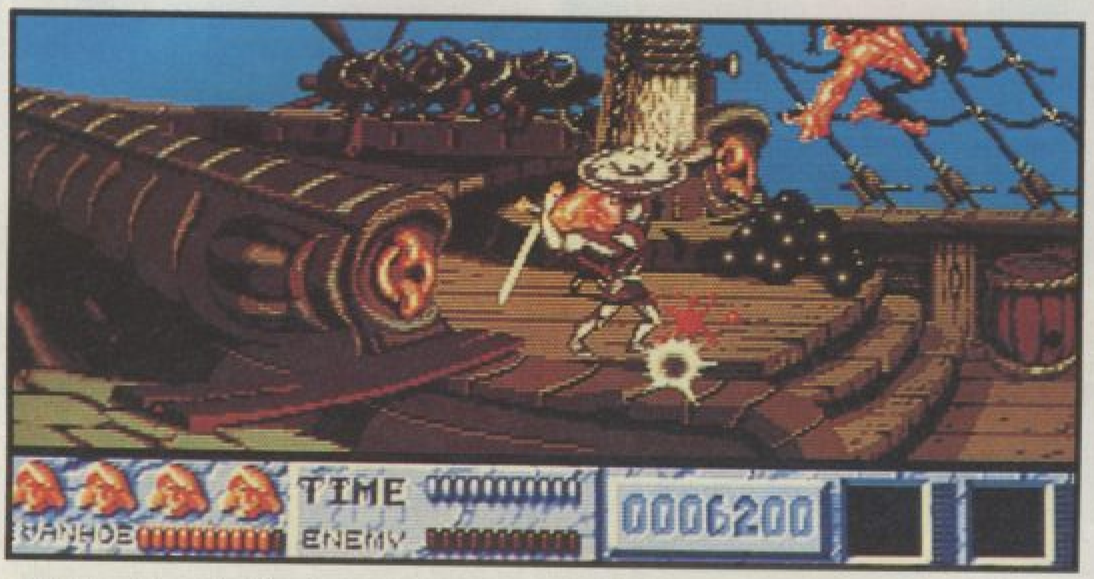
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Where's Asterix The Gaul?

IVANHOE

OCEAN



GAME **IVANHOE**	
PRODUCER **OCEAN**	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£19.99

ATARI ST **75%**

The first thing that strikes you upon loading the game is the graphics. Great detail has gone into both the character and background sprites, but when you discover that the graphic artist is the guy who worked on the Asterix The Gaul movie you'll understand why *Ivanhoe* has such a cartoony look. Sound, on the other hand, is initially pleasant, but quickly grates. But as pretty as the game is, the visuals can't hide the lack of playability. Apart from a few unimpressive extra weapons, Ivanhoe has only his sword to swipe at the numerous bad guys. Pretty graphics maketh not a good game.

Oh heavieee, the kingdom is in turmoil... the lentil crop has perished, long hair is out and someone's stolen my flairs. Ohh, and Vivian's kidnapped King Richard. The poor guy needs rescuing and I'm not volunteering.

As usual you play the hero with a silly name who must brave five peril-filled levels. Level one takes place in the local forest. Clad in armour and sporting a sword and shield, Ivanhoe must hack and slash his way through the likes of wizards, vultures, axe-wielding dandies (what, you mean Warren is featured in the game? - Ed) and stick-brandishing thugs.

Throughout the game power-ups are to be found. These supply you with extra energy, a flaming shield or two shadow Ivanhoes. Some attackers only take a couple of swipes to kill. Others have energy bars that must be whittled down. You must reach the relative safety of the end of the level to qualify for an, erm... end-of-round bonus and the chance to earn a bonus life.

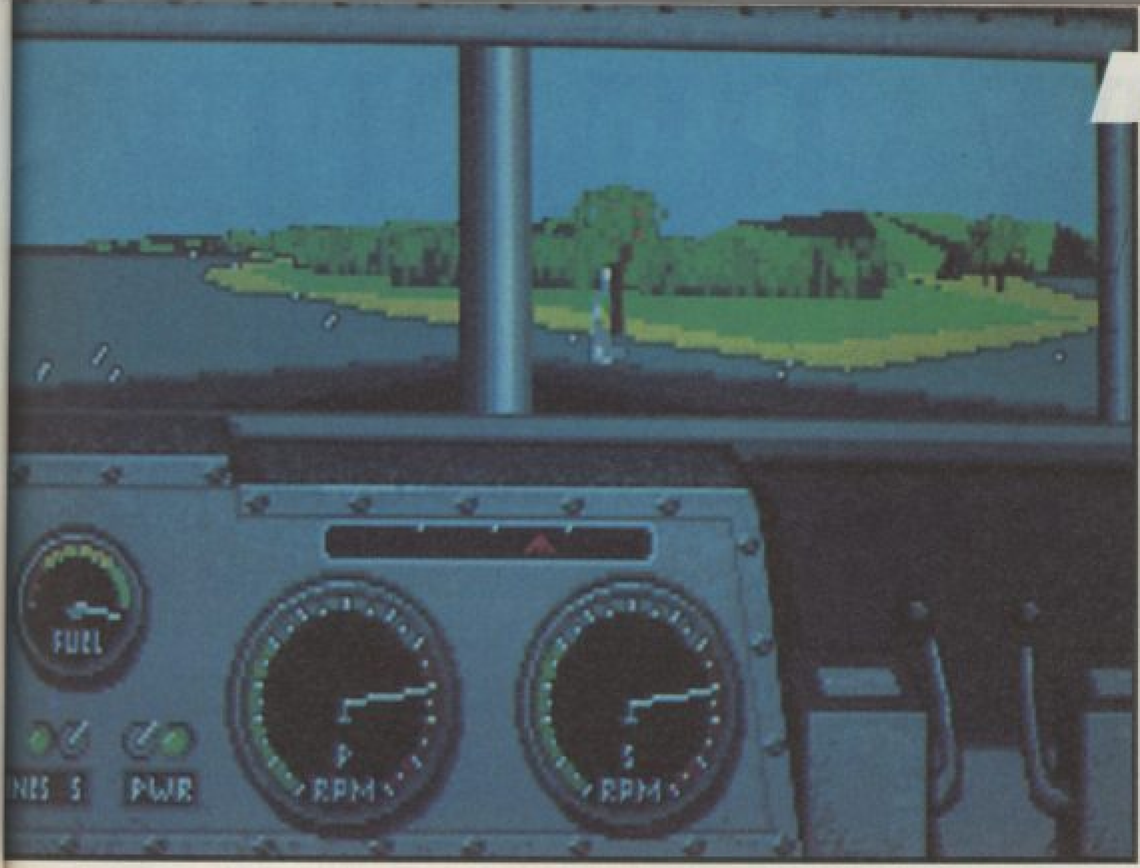
The bonus round takes place in a cave with your opponent at one end and you at the other. More often than not your opponent is huge and built like a freight train. Beat him and you get an extra life.

Harr, Jim lad, the second level takes you on a 'yo, ho, ho and a rottle of bum' excursion on a pirate ship. A motley bunch of pirates attack with everything from knives to hand bombs. For some strange reason some of the pirates do Tarzan impressions.

The third scene takes place on horseback. As you gallop along you must jump over obstacles while destroying airborne attackers. Level four takes place in an unnamed town. The guys from the first level are back, so you get to tackle even more axemen, archers and pole swingers. The fifth and final level houses the castle in which the king is held captive.

Mark Caswell





GAME	GUNBOAT
PRODUCER	ACCOLADE
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£29.99
ATARI ST	£29.99
C64	£9.99/£16.99
PC	£29.99

PC **81%**

Prepare to cast off and enter some of the hottest action that you are likely to experience in a game. Graphically *Gunboat* contains some really nice (and realistic) touches. Such as both the PBR and guns having to be powered up before use, the safety catches which have to be taken off the guns before they can fire, and in night missions the spotlights which must be switched on (though this does make you a sitting duck). All three graphics modes are supported, with beautiful VGA, and the game is very playable in all. *Gunboat* also supports the Tandy 3-Voice, CMS, AdLib and Roland MT-32 soundboards for added realism.

In the navy, you can sail the seven seas

GUNBOAT

ACCOLADE

We had *The Lost Patrol* a couple of months back, so you should be well prepared for the water warfare of *Gunboat*. Upon loading, you have two choices; practice (piloting or guns) or go on a mission. Your main aim is to rise in the ranks by completing a number of these missions.

As in the real world, your PBR (patrol boat: river) contains four crew members: a pilot, the bow gunner, the engineer/midship gunner and the stern gunner. The commanding officer will offer you a mission in one of three areas: Vietnam, Columbia or the Panama Canal Zone. Though, your rank determines the area you are sent to, so the first few missions are based in Vietnam. Once a mission brief has been chosen it only remains to arm your PBR with the relevant weapons.

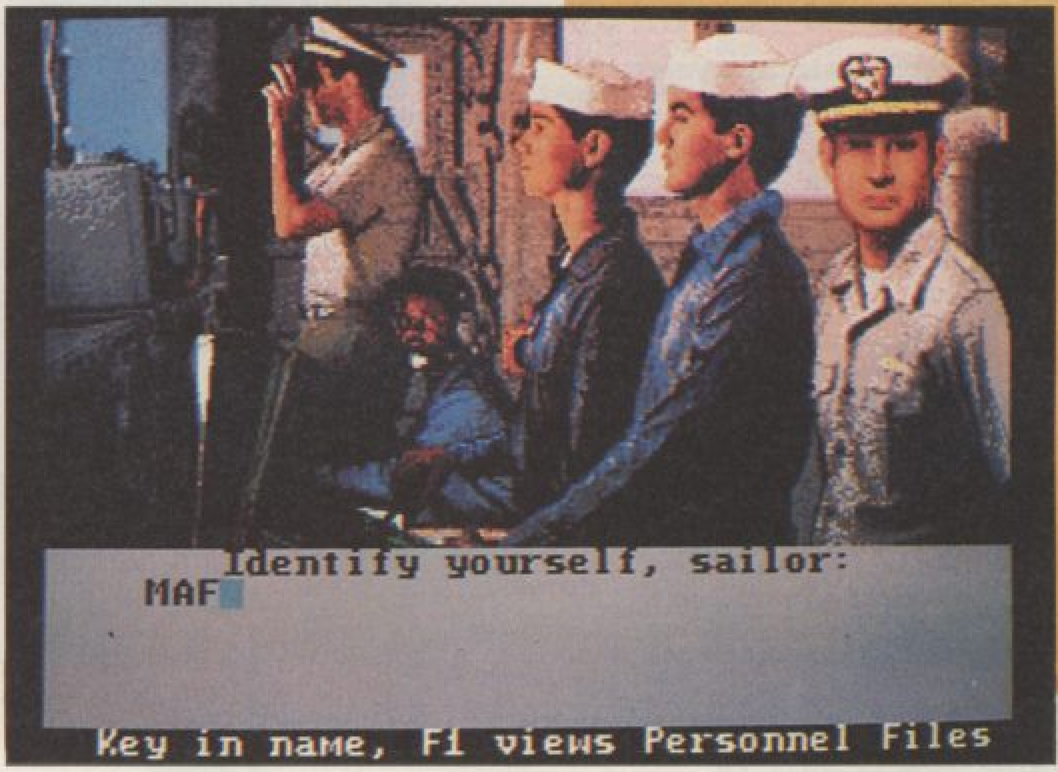
While you move around the boat, mastering each post, the computer takes command of the other three. Although it follows orders unquestioningly, its gunnery leaves a lot to be desired. In times of quiet (there are very few of them) the best place is in the pilot's seat. However, when things hot up, leap into one of the gunner seats and let rip.

The mission can end in three ways: successful completion, the death of all crew members, or you becoming totally bored and going to the cinema to watch the latest Vietnam war movie — I doubt you'll ever encounter the latter.

Mark Caswell



■ We've all seen combat flight simulators where you have to man several posts at once. Now Accoladelet you do this with a life on the ocean wave (I thought you said this was an Accolade game — Ed) amongst a group of nice sailors — extra-curricular activities aren't included



SHORTS

BLACK TIGER US GOLD
■ Amiga ■ £24.99

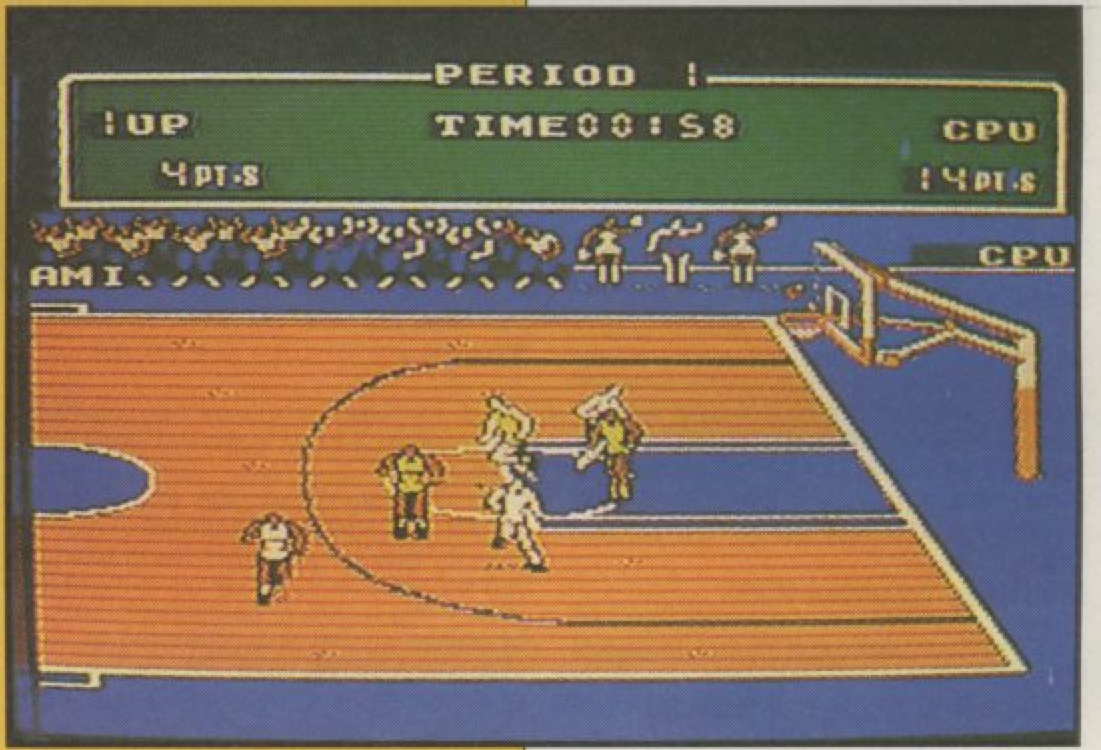
Originally reviewed: TGM029.

Err, little can be added to the ST comment... the graphics are the same, bold and colourful (the 16-Bit code was taken from the arcade machine, so they should look good). The action is as fast and frenetic, but sadly there isn't much improvement in the sonics department.

MC

Machine update: 84%

DOUBLE DRIBBLE
Konami ■ NES ■ £29.99



Nintendo claim this to be the first five-on-five full court home basketball game, and I for one am not going to argue. You must decide between one and two player modes, the time limit per period (there are four periods per game), teams (Boston, Los Angeles, New York and Chicago) and finally the difficulty level (1 to 3). Now my knowledge of basketball goes no further than the Harlem Globetrotters (and the first one to whistle 'Sweet Georgia Brown' gets thumped), but even I know that to win a game you have to score 'baskets'.

There are three ways of doing this. First there's the bog standard two-point throw from within the boundary. Next, if you want to show off, there's a slam dunk (running up to the basket and athletically hurling the ball) for two points. And finally, there's an out-of- boundary throw which earns you three points. So lob those balls and hit those baskets.

Double Dribble is a good way to acquaint yourself with one of America's biggest and best sports. Graphically the game is a little disappointing; the sprites are colourful, but they lack detail. Though sound is a mixture of jingles and spot effects, they blend together nicely to create the right atmosphere. Recommended to fans of the sport.

MC

Machine rating: 79%

MINDROLL
Thalamus/Epyx ■ Amiga ■

This was originally called *Quedex* ('QUEst for the ultimate DEXterity') and was released for the Commodore 64 on the Thalamus label. American companies tend to change the name of products when they have gained the marketing/conversion rights.

The game is unchanged. You guide a ball through ten different planes, working against a time limit and often with a limited number of jumps. The planes test joystick skills and intelligence with a combination of maze, reaction and switching games.

For some strange reason, Epyx have decided to completely change the graphical style, from high-tech to mystical. The result is pretty naff: lots of pretentious columns and motifs. Worst of all is the ball itself, which is now an eyeball which rotates in a highly irritating manner when not being controlled. Sound is adequate and scrolling juddery.

Quedex was the worst of Stavros Fasoulas' three Thalamus games and is now showing its age (it was originally reviewed in TGM002). Unfortunately in its 16-bit incarnation the game is not going to set the World alight.

WL

Machine update: 76%

COBRA TRIANGLE
Rare/Ultimate ■ NES ■ £29.99

You control a highly modified Cobra Class speed boat. Your mission is to battle your way through 25 stages filled with more challenges than you could shake an Anneka Rice at. These are (in no particular order), race to the finish, collect the pods, dispose of mines, beat the monster, guard the people, reach the finish, jump the waterfall and shoot the targets. Okay, I know that doesn't constitute 25 levels, but those eight appear in different combinations.



As you battle your way through each section, you are allotted an energy level (shown in the instrument panel). As you make contact with hard objects (that is, other craft, river banks and so on) this drops dramatically. You can collect power-up pods to gain turbo speed, increased firepower, increased speed, missiles and a force field.

You can tell that *Cobra Triangle* comes from the people that brought you *RC Pro—Am* because the same graphical style is in evidence. There are only eight levels of play, but every one is tougher than the last. Perhaps the most frustrating is the jump-the-waterfall section, but patience reaps rewards (as always).

MC

Machine rating: 80%

WAYNE GRETZKY HOCKEY
Bethesda Softworks ■ Atari ST ■ £19.99

A considerably more polished product than the C64 original, but still a pretty rough piece of software considering the upgrade from eight to 16 bits. The options screen is easy to use, but very bland and the hockey pitch is little more than a wide open space. Player sprites move well, but are small and lack in detail. Loud thunks, thwacks and sirens mean this is one to annoy the neighbours. Disk access is slow and frequent and, along with visual weaknesses, spoils what would've been a great game for hockey fans (well I really like it - Dominic).

WL

Machine update: 76%

X-OUT
Rainbow Arts ■ Commodore 64 ■ £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Originally reviewed: TGM027
The sharp graphics of the Amiga original helped the game along tremendously. So it's no surprise that this game is far less remarkable on 8-bit. Good use has been made of the C64's colour and resolution. Sound takes inspiration from *Paradroid*, but unfortunately playability is a few notches below that of the classic Braybrook game.
WL
Machine update: 79%



FIENDISH FREDDY'S BIG TOP O' FUN
Mindscape ■ Amstrad CPC ■ £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Originally reviewed: TGM022
Although a touch on the blocky side, graphics are well defined and animated smoothly. Music is jolly but irritating after a while. Loading, whether from disk or tape, is slow. Some sequences from the original Amiga version are missing, but the essence of the game remains true, and that means high playability and plenty of fun.
WL
Machine update: 83%

FRED
Ubi Soft ■ Amiga ■ £24.99
Originally reviewed: TGM029

Virtually identical to the ST version except for a slightly larger playing area. Some great dwarf sprites, but boring background and Fred graphics. Silly sounds and outdated gameplay.
WL
Machine update: 67%

MEGA MAN
Capcom ■ NES ■ £29.99

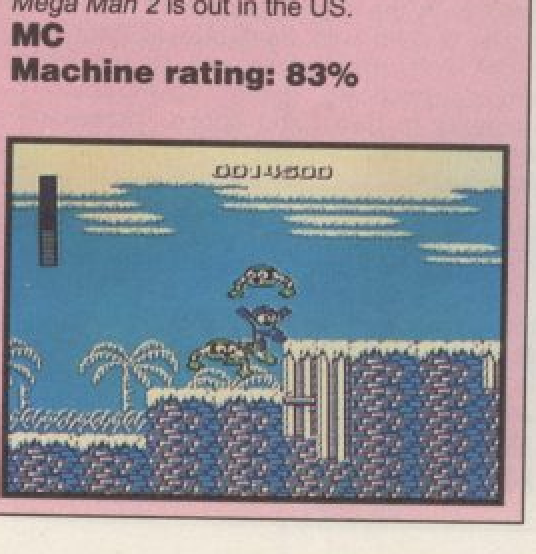
TGM STAR PLAYER

It was the brilliant Dr Wright who created the human-like robots that were used to perform everyday tasks. Mega Man was his first triumph. Along with his assistant, Dr Wily, Wright created another six: Cutman, Iceman, Gutsman, Bombman, Fireman and Elecman. Unfortunately Dr Wily turned out to be a complete fruitcake and reprogrammed the supposedly docile domestic droids into raving rebellious robots. Wily now controls the maniac robots and plans to take over the World.

You control the amiable Mega man and must thwart Wily's attempts.

Each of the maniac robots resides in different terrain. Iceman, for instance, inhabits icey wastes while Fireman dwells in the smokey depths of hell. To reach Wily you must first tackle his minions. Mega Man is armed only with a laser gun, but by shooting certain of the creatures both energy top-ups and weapon power-ups can be collected. Once one of the robots has been beaten, you are given a more powerful weapon and moved onto the next battle ground.

Mega Man is great; six very tough opponents stand between you and success (well seven if you count Dr Wily). Graphically and sonically *Mega Man* is very good. The wide variety of backdrops is impressive. Sound consists of an average tune and the occasional spot effects. It's a shame the game has only been released now. *Mega Man* has been available in the States for over a year. Even *Mega Man 2* is out in the US.
MC
Machine rating: 83%



ATOMIX
Thalion ■ Amiga ■ £19.99

Which everyday substance does HIJKLMNO represent? Easy: water — H to O (eau! - Ed).
Coincidentally, H2O is the first chemical formula that must be assembled in *Atomix*. In each level, the different parts of a formula are spread around an angular, maze-like area. Using a cursor, the elements have to be shifted around and connected to each other in the correct order. This isn't as easy as it sounds because, once set in motion, the elements don't stop until they hit something and are adverse to changing direction while in motion.

A great picture of Albert Einstein, backed by a moody but plain tune, leads to a very bland looking game. Colours are few and not very detailed.

Atomix's design is an old one. It's already been used in Entertainment International's *Leonardo* and Logotron's *Xor*. The game's fine, but it's all been done before.
WL
Machine rating: 73%

HOT ROD
Activision ■ Spectrum ■ £9.99/£14.99

See Amiga review
I really don't know why I'm wasting my time reviewing this pile of donkey doo. The cars are monochromatic; you never know which vehicle is yours, and once you've sorted out which car is which you lose track of the direction it's facing... aaaghh! Take my advice, if you buy this, Mr Mad will probably leap out of the packaging screeching 'you need a check up from the neck up!'
MC
Machine rating: 40%

HOT ROD
Activision ■ Amiga ■ £24.99

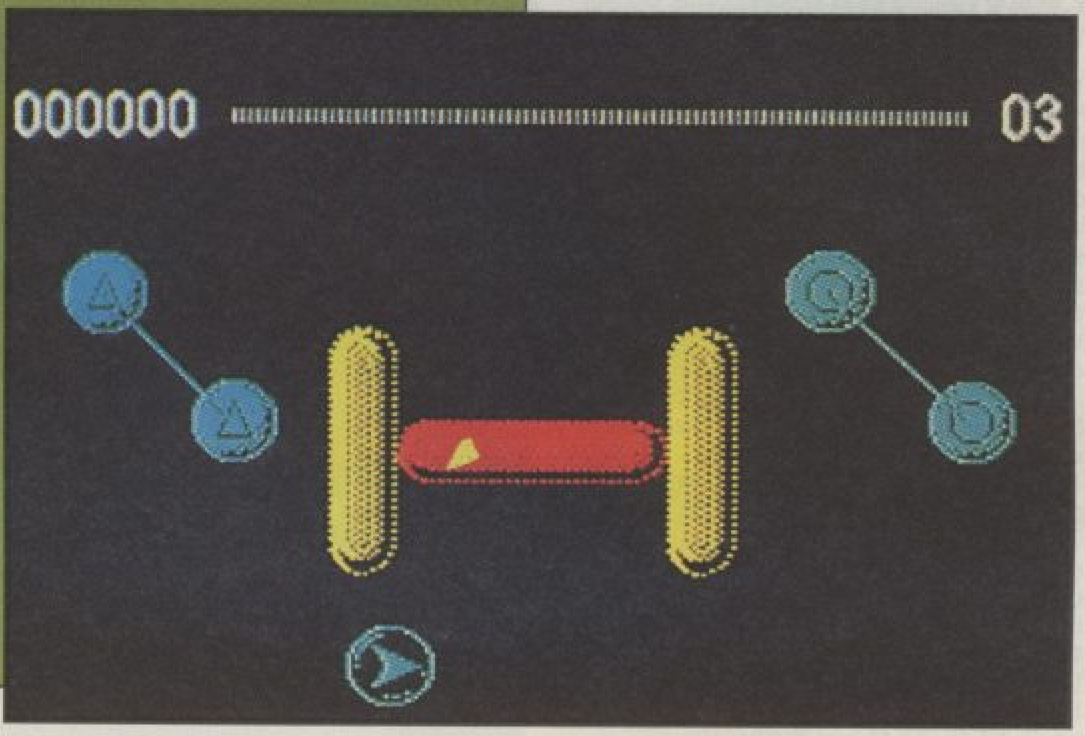
Sega have released many top class coin-ops in the past, but I must admit that this isn't one of my favourites. Not that it's awful, I'd say it's more average than dire. *Hot Rod* is a rip roaring racing game in which you strive to come first (or at least finish the race). You are allotted a supply of fuel that must last you throughout the race (run out and it's end of game). Supplies can be picked up, but you've got to grab them fast as other competitors have no qualms about pinching it from beneath your nose.

Other cars aren't your only worries. Obstacles of all sizes try to prevent you reaching that finishing line. But when you do reach it, you are awarded with lots of dosh and points bonus. You also move into the parts store. Here bumpers, tyres, front and rear engines, and wings are on offer.

E-MOTION
US Gold ■ Spectrum ■ £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Originally reviewed: TGM029.
Because of the monochromatic nature of the sprites, the only way you can distinguish between atoms is to watch the symbols. This is annoying. The game in general, however, is fast and very, very playable.
MC
Machine update: 88%

TGM STAR PLAYER



Graphically *Hot Rod* is very pretty, although the main sprites are blocky. Sound consists of an annoying tune that numbs the mind. This isn't the strongest Sega title that Activision have released, though it isn't the worst either.
MC
Machine rating: 72%

HOT ROD
Activision ■ Atari ST ■

See Amiga review
Graphically this version of *Hot Rod* is a dead ringer for the Amiga. The sound is just as annoying. As with the Amiga game, the scrolling screen causes your car to get trapped in the corner - very frustrating.
MC
Machine rating: 70%

SUPER CARS
Gremlin ■ Atari ST ■ £19.99

Originally reviewed: TGM027
Although not quite as colourful, the intro screens are similar to the pleasing Amiga ones. Actual game graphics are short on colour; the so-called 'super' cars are simply wimpy little boxes. Music is old-fashioned and irritating, and disk access is slow and unnecessary.
WL
Machine update: 61%

TYPHOON THOMPSON
Broderbund/Domark ■ Amiga ■ £19.99

Originally reviewed: TGM018
A very special man, Typhoon Thompson, has been given the job of rescuing a child stranded on the sea world of Aguar. He starts the game by being dumped into his Jet-Sled by a galactic cop. The child has been captured by amphibian imps called sea sprites, who live in villages made up from tiny islands. Each village has a central island where a sprite leader guards a magical item that Thompson must collect. To gain the item, Thompson has to capture each sprite in the village. Shooting an island forces a sprite to come out in a flier (a hovering vehicle that can damage Thompson or his sled). Shooting the flier drops the sprite into the drink, where he can be scooped up into a bag.

Apart from a larger playing area and smoother graduation on the sky shading, it's virtually identical to the ST original. There aren't many graphics - the screen's mainly full of sea - but what's present is brilliant. The sprites are small, but clearly defined and animated in a realistic and humorous manner. In fact, little short of amazing considering the size. Sound is close to the ST, but the crude bleep effects suit the game perfectly and music is nice and 'Dick Barton'.

I'm pleased that *Typhoon Thompson* has finally reached the Amiga with fantastically high playability fully intact. The sled's difficult to control but once accustomed to it's a joy, and becomes highly addictive. Fun, original and great value at £19.99 - get it.
WL
Machine update: 90%

MINDROLL
Epyx ■ PC ■ £24.99

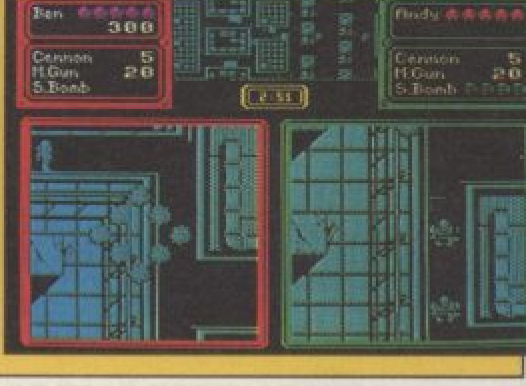
See Amiga review
Even EGA can't help the unsavoury look of this game: definition is grainy and some bad choices of colour have been made. Scrolling is fine for the PC, but sound is the usual warbly noise. Gameplay is even less exciting when using the keyboard.
WL
Machine rating: 70%

TGM STAR PLAYER

CRACKDOWN
US Gold ■ Commodore 64 ■ £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
Originally reviewed: TGM029.
On the C64, Andy and Ben are blocky, but they manage to cause enough trouble for the attacking drones. My only slight moan is the fact that in a group of drones your character is almost invisible.
MC
Machine update: 87%

CRACKDOWN
US Gold ■ Spectrum ■ £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Originally reviewed: TGM029.
Monochromatic sprites abound (no surprise), but the Speccy version is just as playable as the other versions reviewed. In all, *Crackdown* is excellent.
MC
Machine rating: 88%



LEAVIN' TERAMIS
Thalion ■ Atari ST ■ £19.99

You're Nigel MacGibbons and, after a heavy drinking session, wake to find yourself in unfamiliar surroundings and unable to remember the happenings of the previous night (like one of your weekends, then, Warren? — Ed). You're stuck in a very long ship and have to reach the end of its eight sections within a time limit. Aliens have taken over the ship and try to stop you. With your laser you try to convince them otherwise.

Graphics are small and lacking in detail, but scrolling's fine and end-of-level aliens are good. Intro music is excellent.

Someone at Thalion has clearly been playing Sega's *Alien Syndrome*: *Leavin' Teramis* has similar scenario, gameplay and graphic style. Unfortunately it hasn't copied the good bits very well. Gameplay and visuals are boring, and there's very little to do. At least with *Alien Syndrome* there were people to rescue as well. Leave this on the shelves; give it a miss. **WL**

Machine rating: 60%

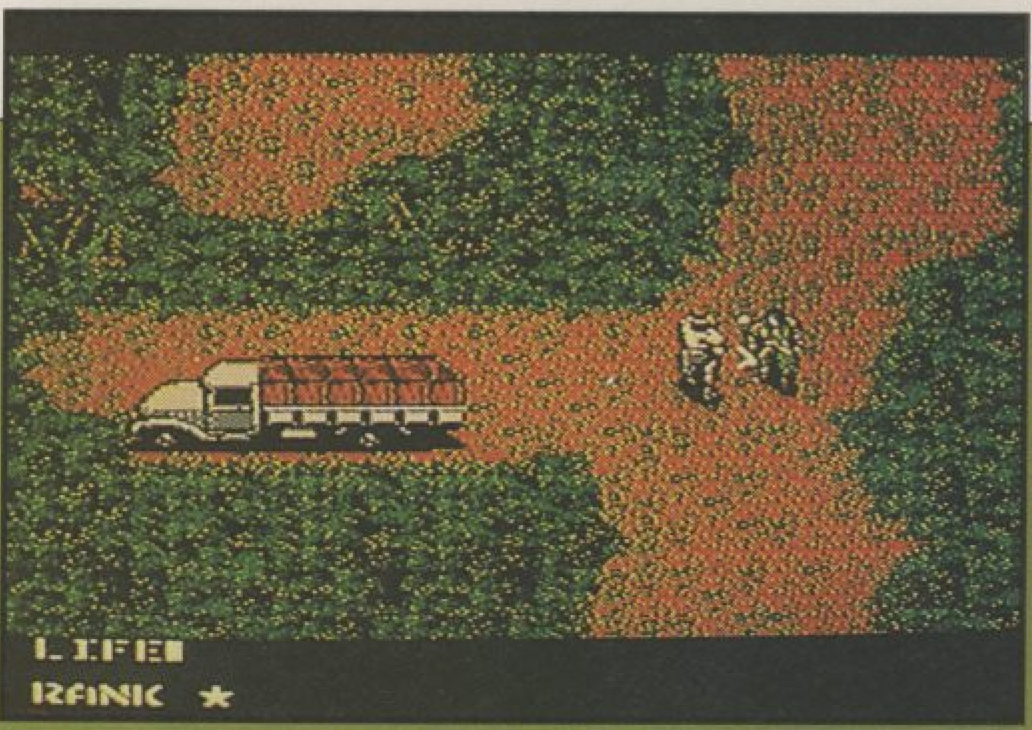
WEIRD DREAMS
Rainbird ■ Commodore 64 ■ £14.99

Originally reviewed: TGM020

Graphics are drab and undetailed. Animation is mediocre. Sound effects are few and unremarkable. The imaginative visuals were the only element to give the 16-bit versions any credibility; the severely watered down versions seen here mean this really is nothing to write home about.

WL

Machine update: 57%



METAL GEAR
Konami ■ NES ■ £29.99

Ever since an early age, Verman CaTaffy has dreamed of becoming a terrorist. Now he has taken over the small country of Outer Heaven and turned innocent locals into terrorists. But more importantly he has created the ultimate super weapon named Metal Gear CaTaffy, and has threatened the free world with its awesome might. Only you as Solid Snake, a mercenary of high regard, can destroy CaTaffy and his weapon.

At first you have nothing for defence but your bare hands, but there are three ways to gain essential weapons and equipment. You occasionally come across enemy trucks or storehouses. Both of these may contain certain goodies. If you feel particularly brave you can kick the donkey doos out of certain guards and pick up their weapons. So there is your mission: destroy CaTaffey and Metal Gear and get out in one piece. *Metal Gear* is my least favourite of the Nintendo games reviewed this month, mainly because of the amount of trudging around that's necessary. There isn't enough action for my liking, though more patient souls may find this interesting. Graphically the game is good. The usual chunky Nintendo sprites have been put to good use with Solid Snake manfully yomping around and blasting the stuffing out of all and sundry. Take a look at *Metal Gear* if strategy games are more your cup of tea.

MC

Machine rating: 70%

CORKY'S COIN-OPS

The complete guide to everything arcade: reviews, previews, news, tips, charts... There's only one person who could supply such comprehensive coverage; pity we couldn't get him. But fear not, a more than able substitute comes in the (not very small) form of Mark 'Corky' Caswell...

SHADOW DANCER
● Sega

Joe Musashi of *Shinobi* fame is back and this time he's brought his dog. *Shadow Dancer* is a tale of Ninjitsu magic, shuriken stars and hospital treatment. It sounds violent, and it is.

Your humble city has been taken over by a group of terrorists. They have already struck elsewhere in the world and their tactics are well known. The band of criminals have placed time bombs throughout Metropolis which are set to go off within 24 hours. As a caring citizen, Joe, and Fang the Wonder Mutt, must seek out the time bombs and disarm them.

There are four areas to the city, each with 15 districts, all inhabited by thugs from street gangs, animals and the terrorists.

The first section places Joe and Fang in an airport terminal. Armed with a samurai sword, shuriken stars and a limited supply of ninja magic, you must both progress along the screen beating up everything in sight. Attackers wield knives, swords and guns, and none spare time to introduce themselves. Get out there and kick ass.

While the sword and stars are useful, it won't stop the guys who catch you from behind. Leave these to the Wonder Mutt, he'll soon rip their throats out. However, even Fang has been known to end up in doggy heaven so have ninja magic ready at all times. One cast of this little spell and Joe's invincible. Use it sparingly though, you have three more areas to go — and they don't get any easier.

SEARCH AND RESCUE
● SNK

Into the depths of space an exploration ship disappears. Back on Earth, they receive a last ditch mayday message from the aforementioned vessel. There's no time to waste. As a tough, rough and not-quite-ready-yet agent, you are sent out to investigate and report. Where are they? Why are they there? Who's with them...?

When you reach the craft you find it physically intact but completely devoid of lifeforms (*human* lifeforms, that is). There are some deformed creatures, but they couldn't be *your* crew, could they? No time to ask questions, just whip out your machine gun and protect yourself. Of course, the ship's own onboard security system has to be taken out too, it thinks *you're* the intruder.

As you blast through the corridors of the ship, you find scattered about extra weaponry. (Could come in useful.) The action is certainly fast and furious, with attacks often coming from behind as well as the sides. It's just as well the joystick knob twists around for total control over the man. With excellent sonics too (there's a great pounding soundtrack) I would highly recommended *Search and Rescue.*

PANG
● Mitchell Corp

Pang has a big problem. He is trapped on a world where large bouncing bubbles threaten to squash him flat. It's a hard life in the big city, so choose the city you want to start in and get popping. Shooting the bubbles may reduce the size of some of them, but it doubles their quantity. One more blow from your blaster and they'll totally disappear, only to reveal bonus objects. These range from improved weaponry and bombs to little clocks that freeze the bubs in their tracks.

The swift scrolling and impressive sound, combined with compelling gameplay, create a surefire hit for the arcades.

HOT SLOTS FOR APRIL

1. FINAL FIGHT
2. BEAST BUSTERS
3. SCI
4. BIG RUN
5. WORLD CUP
6. MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE
7. VAPOUR TRAIL
8. PUNK
9. SHADOW DANCER
10. OPERATION THUNDERBOLT



■ I know I said give the man a hand, but this is ridiculous. Deep in the stricken spaceship the intrepid hero of Search And Rescue is attacked by giant robot hands.

BEAST BUSTERS
● SNK

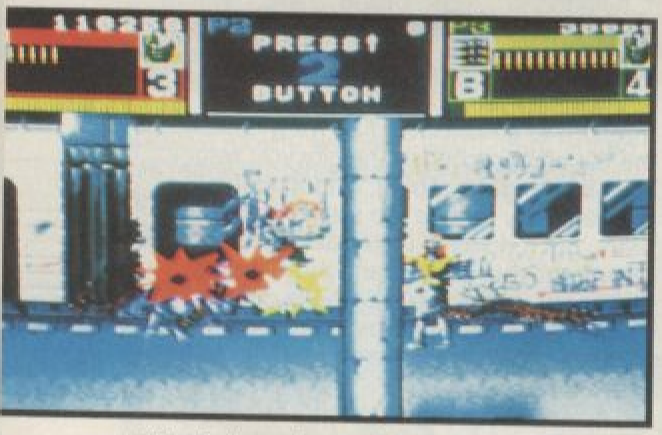
Looking like something out of a George A Romero zombie film, SNK's *Beast Busters* is yet another *Operation Wolf* clone.

People have been disappearing recently under mysterious circumstances. And the strange thing is that they've all gone AWOL in the same place. Enter our three heroes: Johnny, Sammy and Paul (sounds like Big Fun). They enter a city full of zombies (sounds even more like Big Fun). Not just human ones; devil dogs, zombies and evil birds (among others) try to make you join them in the land of the undead.

Like *Wolf*, the cabinet features a bolt-on machine gun, with the display panel showing grenades, bullets and energy. The latter can be increased by picking up extra goodies which float down the screen when you kill a baddie.

There are three types of grenade available. The normal explosive type, electro grenades that create a spectacular lightning display, and rocket-powered ones that destroy everything (for good!). The culmination of a level means confrontation with either a large zombie or numerous small buggers.

Summing up, *Op Wolf* all over again. But, then again, that's not a bad thing is it? Keep an eye out for *Beast Busters*.



■ Deep in the underground the zombies attack, Beast Busters is the latest SNK blaster that owes more than a little to Taito's classic Operation Wolf. Blast the undead hordes, but watch the ammo.

ALIENS
● Konami

It all started when the interstellar tug Nostromo received a mysterious message from an alien presence, possibly stranded on a planet know only as LV-426. They investigated and found a strange bio-mechanical creature who killed all aboard except Warrant officer Ellen Ripley.

Now, 57 years later, LV-426 has been named Acheron and a colony has been established there. Ripley has been found in the shattered remains of her escape pod and upon recovery from her long hypersleep she is asked to accompany a Space Marine investigation to find out why Earth has lost contact with its colonial outpost.

When you land, you find a young child, Newt, the last remaining human on Acheron. After spending many hours rescuing her, Newt is nabbed from you by the aliens. No time to waste, you must trek out and find the young nipper.

Though not 100% accurate to the film — some elements have been implemented to increase gameplay — *Aliens* is still as eerie as the James Cameron film. As Ripley walks

BIGGER AND BETTER

Coin-op conversions are big business nowadays. Any software house will tell you, coin-op licences are an integral part of their publishing strategy. TGM checks out the coin-op conversion scene for early 1990...

US GOLD
Successes with games like *Strider*, *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* and *Turbo Out Run* have made the Birmingham-based software house even more determined to battle it out with the others to gain the big coin-op titles. On the cards for the next few months are *Black Tiger*, Sega's *Crackdown*, Capcom's *Dynasty Wars* and *UN Squadron*.

Despite years of delay, *Black Tiger looks* very nice, but the game itself is still very old. *Dynasty Wars* isn't the life story of the Carringtons, it's an oriental slash-'em-up with evil warriors trying to slash each other's throats (actually, it does sound a bit like Dynasty). And in *UN Squadron* three brave agents set out to infiltrate and overthrow a criminal cartel that plans to take over the world.

DOMARK
Domark, who only signed up longterm with Tengen just over a year ago, have proved that almost anyone can produce great coin-op conversions if they make an effort. Witness their recent hits *Vindicators, Xybots* and *Hard Drivin'*. Four more are on their way...

Cyberball is the first, a futuristic gridiron game. It'll be quickly followed by *Escape From the Planet of the Robot Monsters*, like *Xybots* another two-player game, and like *Cyberball* it seems to be coming on nicely.

Timed to coincide with the release of the arcade game, *Klax* is set for an April release. Armed with a paddle, the player must catch coloured tiles as they roll down the screen and then deposit them in a bin. Sounds like a *Tetris* challenger to me. *STUN Runner*, complete with stunning graphics, has been delayed and is now set for a summer/autumn release.

OCEAN
The Manchester-based company have done well to balance their original product with their film and arcade licences. 1990 looks like another successful year for the software company that can do no wrong...

Shadow Warriors is the story of a ninja's one man battle against crime and destruction in NYC. Also on the cards is *Midnight Resistance*, where one or two be-stubbled chaps use their 'credit cards' to obtain extra weaponry on their quest through an enemy stronghold. Another interesting release is *Special Criminal Investigations* (Chase HQ II), more motor massacre on the crime-riddled streets. One for next Christmas, perhaps?

ACTIVISION
Apart from original titles like *Hammerfist* and *Warhead* , Reading-based Activision are on the brink of releasing six arcade conversions in the next few of months.

Due for a March release (on all major formats) are *Ninja Spirits*, a multi-level oriental beat-'em-up; *Hot Rod*, a rip-roaring racing game; and *Sonic Boom*, one man's fight in the latest jet fighter technology. The other three don't have release dates yet: *Atomic Robo Kid*, a fast action beat-'em-up; *R-Type II*, an upgraded sequel; and *Dragon Breed*, myths, mayhem, knights and dragons.

Coming to a screen near you soon.



■ It's 57 years later, but Ripley is back in Konami's sci fi chiller Aliens. Here she is attacked by one of the nastier end of level aliens, when it appears on the screen it rolls around in a ball. But beware because as Ripley finds out there is a nasty surprise inside (and it isn't a Kinder toy).



around the ship she isn't alone for long. The aliens soon live up to the bad press they've been getting, and jump on Ripley with venom. One blast from your smart gun soon turns then into alien slime, with their dripping entrails splashing against the corridor walls. And if that wasn't violent enough for you, around the ship you'll find more weaponry like three-way firing guns, multi-bullet guns, missile launchers and flame throwers.

Graphics are impressive, especially the digitised pictures of the crew which create a wonderful atmosphere. One adventure that's well worth entering.

CORKY'S ALL-TIME TOP TEN

For those who may not have all the latest coin-ops at their fingertips (like anyone living in Ludlow!)...

1

***Tempest* — From the mists of time comes this classic wireframe blast-'em-up.**

2

***Operation Wolf/Thunderbolt* — both are violent, and both incredibly addictive.**

3

***I Robot* — The first solid 3-D game released in this country. It looks as good today as it did in 1984.**

4

***Golden Axe* — Much has been heard of this slash and hack extravaganza. Computer versions are inevitable.**

5

***Aliens* — Konami's version of the ace sci-fi film.**

6

***Search and Rescue* — Contact has been lost with one of our spaceships, two brave volunteers are needed to investigate. Sounds a bit like *Aliens*...**

7

***Afterburner* — After the shock of losing your lunch to this game, you are stunned by the slick graphics and pounding soundtrack.**

8

***Galaxy Force* — Another hydraulic machine that makes sure you're shaken *and* stirred.**

9

***Beast Busters* — A three-player blaster similar to *Operation Wolf*.**

10

***Special Criminal Investigations* — *Chase HQ*'s ace sequel is now on general release.**

■ One of the Crude Busters is about to have his legs singed, the rubble in the background was New York City before the atomic bombs hit. Big Valley were the gents responsible, it looks rather like Ludlow on a Saturday night. But back to business, hit barbecue breath where it hurts and watch out for the Batman style "hit" baloons.

VAPOUR TRAIL

● Data East

Vapour Trail makes no pretensions to be anything but a vertically-scrolling *UN Squadron* — and a rather playable one at that.

Choose from three aircraft — Silph (fast and agile), Selyen (quick and well-armed) and Valkyrie (heavily armoured) — and enter the skies to confront yet more oppressors.

Once in the air you are up against a wide variety of both airborne and ground-based targets. Enemy planes kick out bullets, helicopters dispatch heat-seeking missiles and even the occasional SAM missile makes sure that you aren't lonely. The obligatory power-ups are thankfully in plentiful supply. Extra weapons are the most common, and some of them are pretty devastating (thank goodness).

Some of the attention to detail is quite astounding. One particular sequence sees you attempting the destruction of a huge SAM missile. The longer you take to blast it the nearer it comes to launching. It does nothing good for the nerves to see and hear the engines starting up.

Nothing intrinsically new here, but quite addictive all the same.

CRUDE BUSTER

● Data East

In the year 2010, a great catastrophe hit New York, nuclear devices of unknown origin decimated most of the city. Twenty years later, details are becoming clear of who perpetrated this foul deed. A crime syndicate calling itself Big Valley is subversively trying to take over the world. The US Government have no alternative, they call in two guys known to the underworld as the Crude Busters.

Trudging through the remains of NYC, the Busters encounter villains under various guises. They vary from two-foot tall midgets to guys who would make the Hulk look like a choirboy. And there you are with just your hands and feet!

Occasionally you'll encounter certain flashing objects, these can be picked up and swung around or thrown at attackers. Hitting an attacker displays a POW!, BIFF! or CLUNK! — just like the old *Batman* TV show. There's also some great speech interaction with your enemies: 'Here catch this concrete block, pal!'

Crude Buster is a fun and humorous beat-'em-up that is well worth getting rid of your change on.

UNCORKING S.C.I.

***Special Criminal Investigations* is one of my favourite coin-op games at the moment. To help struggling criminal investigators, here's the Cork Guide to the game that's sweeping the nation — if you can call Brighton 'the nation'...**

■ Instead of continually blasting away with your Colt .45, hold down the fire button for a second or two and then let go. Amazing, you will now have automatic fire.

■ Contact with other road users slows you down and loses valuable time. To avoid a crash shoot at approaching vehicles.

■ When approaching the target vehicle it is best to dispose of the outriders first.

■ Never tackle a big baddie until the helicopter has dropped a bazooka.

■ On tight bends, instead of braking try shifting from high to low gear quickly.

■ Use turbo boosters only when the target vehicle is in range.

■ Don't get a thing wrong on the final stage, time is of the essence.

FINAL FIGHT

● Capcom

Contrary to what you might think, *Final Fight* is not the latest boxing game. It is, unfortunately, yet another walk and hit game. (And they blame computer game producers for being unoriginal!) Although each of the player representations — Guy, Cody and Haggar — do have their own fighting style.

The action starts in the city streets with a variety of bad guys appearing from doorways, ends of the walkway, behind potted plants, etc. Some wield weapons, whilst others try to crush you with their bare hands. You start weaponless, but as you progress, knives, lead pipes, etc appear with which you can whack all and sundry. Once the first section has been cleared it's into the subway to beat up a big fattie and leap aboard a tube train.

Graphically, *Final Fight* is very impressive; brilliantly drawn and animated bad guys may beat seven bells out of the hero, but he can give as good as he gets. Highly recommended.

COIN-OP SOLUTIONS

Tearing your hair out? Breaking pieces of furniture? Running over hedgehogs?

■ YES **Relax. Next month we'll be introducing a new section with tricks, tips, hints and solutions to all the top coin-ops.**

■ NO **You must be an arcade addict. If you are, send in solutions, tips, maps, etc to your fave coin-op corkers. They'll be prizes up for grabs. Send 'em to the usual address, marking your envelope 'Arcade Addicts'.**

TGM TRICKS 'N' CHEATS

The Super Shinobi gets blown wide open and *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* shouldn't pose anymore problems. Robin Candy sorts through your letters and comes up with the most comprehensive tips section around...

Batman — The Movie
Amstrad
Well we've had tips for every other format of the game so why not the Amstrad? Gregory Moor from West Didsbury reveals a quick cheat. Thanks, Greg. To skip to the next level just type in ED209 whilst playing the game.



Ninja Warriors
Amiga
Darren Coston from Reading has help for all you ninjas.
Start the game as usual then press Caps Lock. Now type in CHEDDAR and the screen border will flash. Release Caps Lock and you will have unlimited credits.

X-Out
Amiga
Here's tips from that ace arcadester, Dennis Cowie of Cleethorpes.
Select the smallest ship and the smallest bullet then click on the alien at the top and you will be rewarded with 50,000 credits.

Gates of Zendacon
Atari Lynx
Levels: YARB, BREX, SEBB, SNEX, ZAXX, BROT, STOB, XTNT, BOTZ, SNAX, ZYBX, XRXS, ANEX, NEAT, YARR, EYES, NYXX, ZYRB, SRYX, BARE, STAX, SZZZ, STYX, XRAY, RATT, NYET, TERA, BYTE, BETA, TRAX, ZEBA, ROXY, NEXA, NEST, EBYX, BREX, BOXX, STAB, TENT, ROXX, NERB, TREY, STAR, TRYX, SSSS, ZORT.
Guardian levels: NEAR, ZEST, BRAN.
End level: ZETA.
Hidden level: First you must enter level TRYX. As soon as the level starts, immediately press down and right. If you do this quick enough you will pass through the floor without crashing. Once under the floor, dodge the obstacles and eventually you will find a gate which will take you to the hidden level.

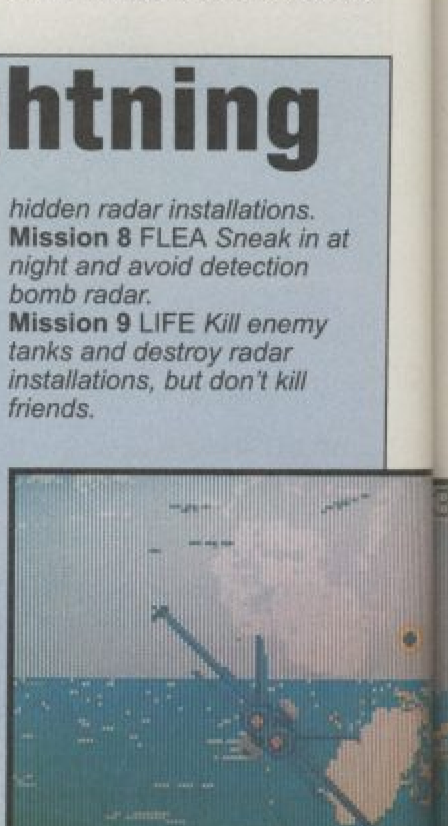
Thunder Force II
Sega Mega Drive
Has your chopper got the best of you? Fear not, Philip Lond of Liverpool is totally in control of his. (Whoops, it was a good joke, even if it was for Thunder Blade!)
When the title screen appears, press button A and start at the same time. A new set of menus will now appear allowing you to adjust the game's difficulty etc.

Enduro Racer
Sega
Useful tips from David Coles of Cardiff.
Reset, then press up, down, left then right. You can now choose which round of the game you wish to begin on.
The Untouchables
Amiga
Type in SOUTHAMPTONGAZETTE on the title screen. Pressing F10 will now advance you a level while pressing HELP on levels two, three or six will automatically place you halfway through that level.
C64
Type in TECHNIQUE on the title screen. Now when you play the game press F5 for extra time and F7 for renewed energy. While if you pause the game and press the left arrow you advance to the next level.

Indiana Jones
The Arcade Game
Atari ST, Amiga
Get yourself onto the high score table and type in SILLYNAM as your name for a continuous continue option.

APB
Amiga
From N Mooney in Birmingham.
When the title screen appears, push the joystick forwards and press fire. The game will now start on day 16.

Blue Lightning
Atari Lynx
Lynx cheats already, I am surprised. Unfortunately I lost part of the letter so I don't know who to thank for the following tips. Anyway, thank you, whoever you are (there can't be many people with Lynx machines out there).
Mission 1 AAAA *Destroy enemy aircraft.*
Mission 2 PLAN *Destroy land and sea targets.*
Mission 3 ALFA *Engage and destroy enemy convoys.*
Mission 4 BELL *Fly through canyon and destroy enemy tanks.*
Mission 5 NINE *Fly low and knock out all enemy radar installations.*
Mission 6 LOCK *Deliver documents to hidden airstrips.*
Mission 7 HAND *Strike hidden radar installations.*
Mission 8 FLEA *Sneak in at night and avoid detection bomb radar.*
Mission 9 LIFE *Kill enemy tanks and destroy radar installations, but don't kill friends.*



Ghouls 'n' Ghosts

All formats

If things that go bump in the night are troubling you, then fear no longer! ZZAP!64/AMIGA/MSX/ORIC/JUPITER ACE person Robin Hogg has generously supplied this definitive guide to completing Ghouls 'n' Ghosts.

General tips

Should you lose your armour, look around for a magic chest. Open it and a magic wizard will appear and change you into a duck. Now avoid any ghouls and when you change back into your normal less duck-like self your armour will be restored.

Magic is best used in moderation, it takes vital seconds to power up and even then its effects aren't always that impressive. The Arthur clone is best suited to tackling those nasties which require multiple hits but the best magic is the three-way electrical beam when used with the lance.

Level one

Watch out for skeletal reapers coming up from below and those approaching from just under your line of fire. While progressing through the level, try to avoid staying on top of hills, you're more vulnerable to attack there.

The second chest contains magic armour. Climb onto the roof of the ruins to shoot at the vultures but try to avoid leaping when near the guillotines.

In the second half, climb the hill, jump and run up to the left, jump up again and run to the right. Kill the wimpy pig creatures and fall down the cliffs.

Walk slowly to the head-lobbing final guardian. Jump up and fire like mad until he's close. Then run away turning around now and then and firing at his head. If you can, get the fast-free dagger and couple it with an autofire joystick.

Level two

Run as fast as you can, move carefully under the low-bouncing turtle heads, and collect the magic armour from the second chest. Kill any low-flying, winged monsters and jump up onto the collapsible platforms.

Run along the first part of the platform (you'll have to move quickly because the platform falls away) and leap over the next half. Jump onto the next platform and keep jumping. Now leap onto the third platform then off onto the floor between the two sand traps. Jump onto the fourth platform and immediately do a running jump to clear the gap. Keep jumping till you're clear of the fifth and final platform.

Kill the winged demon by standing in the centre of the screen and firing up, but beware of his evil saliva. When you notice that the ground graphics have changed, proceed carefully, holes suddenly start appearing in the ground! Watch out for the pesky fire sprites, shoot one if it gets too close. Kill the venus flytrap with two shots and jump over the fire chasms. Kill the other fly trap and when you reach the fire wolf, shoot like mad at him before he leaps. Jump away from him and start firing again. It takes about 15 shots to kill but don't forget to shoot the falling fire bombs for bonus points.

Level three

Move to the far right of the screen to kill the first knifing knight, to the left for the second and stay in the middle for the third. The green sprites are best avoided, especially the stone-dropping ones! The fourth knight is a lot harder, mainly because he comes so soon after the third knight while the fifth knight is nigh impossible to defeat. Instead, go to the left of the spikes and run over to the right as fast as you can.

As the screen scrolls upward, waste as little time as possible killing creatures. Just keep running and you may get away without loss of armour. You can just about scrape by without hitting the ledge above.

Run along the first 'tongue' and wait under the second. As it begins to rise, leap up onto it and run along — timing is crucial if you're to land on the platform below. Keep running with the platform and try to jump onto the next 'tongue' (ignore the chest, it's not worth it).

Miss the third 'tongue' and you may just land on a platform. If so then quickly leap back to the platform on your left and keep leaping to avoid following the platforms into oblivion. Make it onto the third 'tongue' and again you have to time it so that you fall onto the next platform. Jump onto the fourth 'tongue', down onto the last 'tongue' and then back onto the ground. Finally, leap over the holes and fire continuously at the rotating cloud-eye.

Level four

The skeletal reapers from level one make a reappearance, so use the same tactics as before to avoid them. Kill the dragon head by firing rapidly but keep a safe distance. Kill the spitting stone by jumping up and firing from the ledge below (where the dragon head was).

When you come to the slippery slopes initially keep to the centre of the screen to avoid falling off and dying. Getting passed the hands is a bit tricky, once again timing is crucial. Wait until they fire, run up close and hit them. Now jump over the gaps.

Once through, take it carefully on the falling platforms. You can't always see where the next platform is so follow these directions. On the first one leap left to the second, then left again, leap right, right, right and right again. On the final platform do an extra large jump right onto the large creature. Kill the maggot nests in left-to-right order by running above them, leaping up, and firing down on them. Any loose maggots obviously need to be shot first.

Level five

There are no platforms to leap between but there's many a demon that needs to be killed — if you don't kill them they'll follow you, firing all the way.

Avoid or kill the winged creatures and climb the ladders. Just beyond the harmless stationary eye there are two platforms. You have to be right up close to them to be able to jump onto them. Running jumps *will* be rewarded with death.

After this, climb the ladders, kill the pigs, and collect any useful weapons from the chests. The flame-spitting skulls aren't too difficult to avoid; just move in staggered steps between skull spits and you should get to the top. Jump off the platform and then back again to attract the Demon Lord's attention, and just leap up and fire at him after he's fired his salvo of fireballs at you (you don't need to duck).

The two flame-gobbing heads are easy, providing you're quick. Kill the left one before it fires (a random event, so be careful) and then keep your distance to destroy the second head.

Next, open the chest and pick up the magic armour to face the two Demon Lords (a dose of magic when using the standard lance wouldn't go amiss here). The two clouds can be similarly disposed of. Once they're dead, just be careful running up the slopes, open the final treasure chest, climb the ladder, and drop down into the final room.

To kill the Fly King it's best to stay under it and fire up (while being very quick to dodge his 'bullets'). You've got to hit his head so it's no use staying on the ledge. Also the swarm of flies are immune to your shots so avoid! He's a very accurate shot so try to move about lots. Once he's dead you've finished the game. (Well, actually, there's another screen on the Amiga, but Hoggie's yet to suss that!)

nintendo corner

I rarely receive so many tips for one console, especially from one reader. All the following Nintendo cheats were supplied by Stephen O'Connell from Stratford.

Metal Gear

For a full inventory of weapons, type in the following code: 5XZ1C GZZZG U000U UYRZZ NTOZ3.

Punch Out

Try this secret programmer's code: 106 113 0120, then hold down the select, A and B buttons at the same time.

Tiger Heli

To continue from where you died press both the A and B buttons simultaneously.

Gunsmoke

When on the title screen press A four times followed by select three times and then right twice. Now press start. You should begin the game with mega weapons.

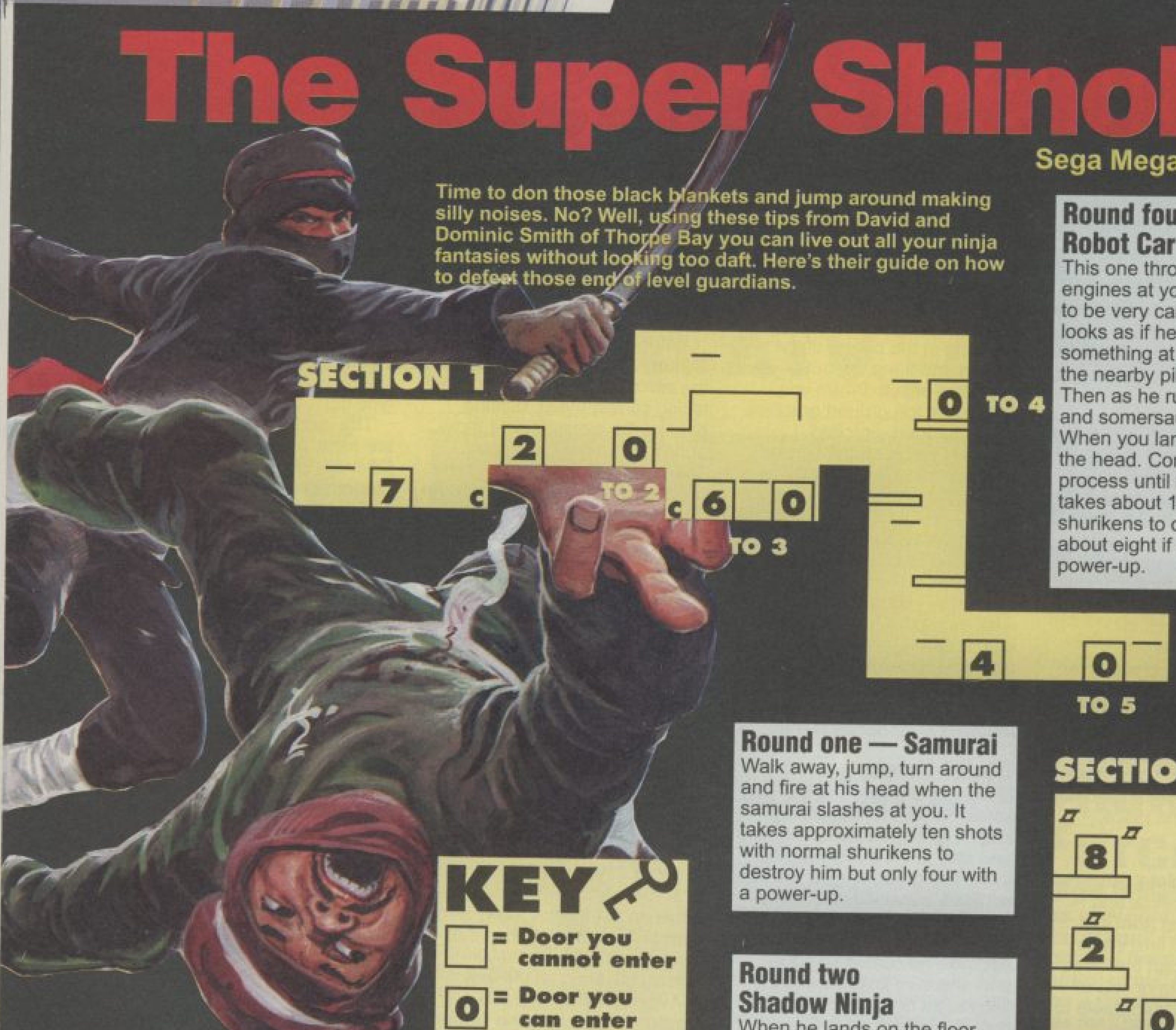
Life Force

When on the title screen press up twice, down twice, left, right, left, right, B, A then start. You will now have 30 lives to play with. Alternatively repeat this procedure four times for up to 120 lives.

The Super Shinobi

Sega Mega Drive

Time to don those black blankets and jump around making silly noises. No? Well, using these tips from David and Dominic Smith of Thorpe Bay you can live out all your ninja fantasies without looking too daft. Here's their guide on how to defeat those end of level guardians.

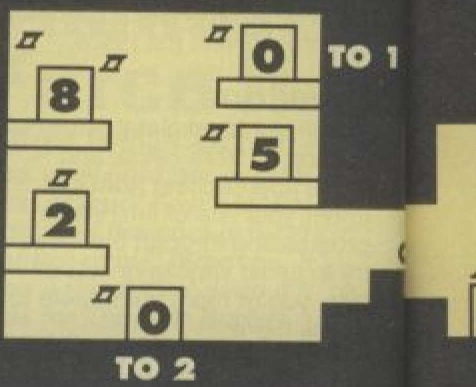


Round four
Robot Car Thrower

This one throws cars and engines at you so you'll have to be very careful. When he looks as if he is going to throw something at you jump onto the nearby pile of rubbish. Then as he runs at you jump and somersault over him. When you land shoot him in the head. Continue this process until he's dead. It takes about 15 normal shurikens to destroy him or about eight if you've got a power-up.

Round one — Samurai

Walk away, jump, turn around and fire at his head when the samurai slashes at you. It takes approximately ten shots with normal shurikens to destroy him but only four with a power-up.



KEY

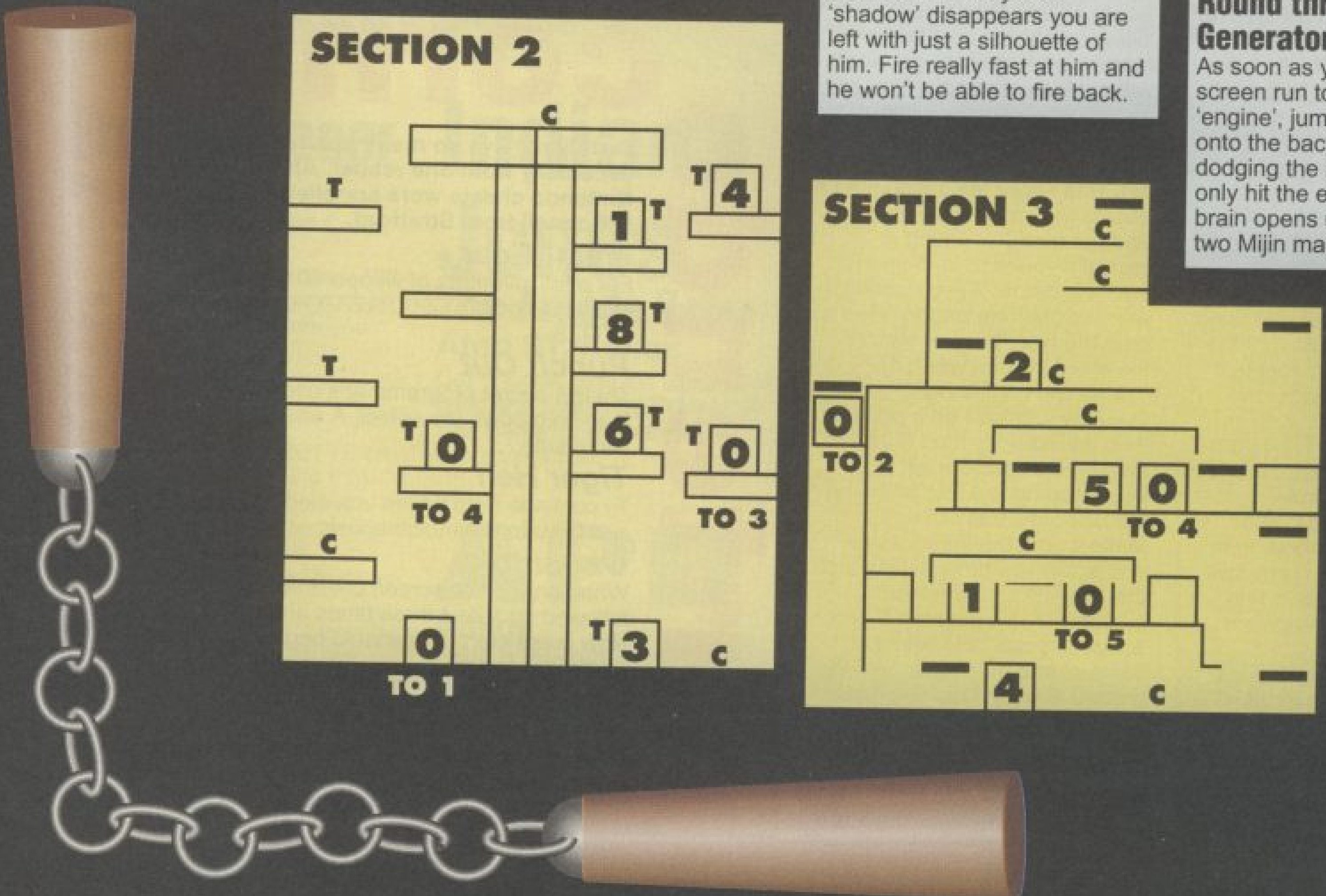
- ☐ = Door you cannot enter
- 0 = Door you can enter
- C = Crate

Round two
Shadow Ninja

When he lands on the floor just keep firing at him. Stay close and he won't hit you. As soon as the last yellow 'shadow' disappears you are left with just a silhouette of him. Fire really fast at him and he won't be able to fire back.

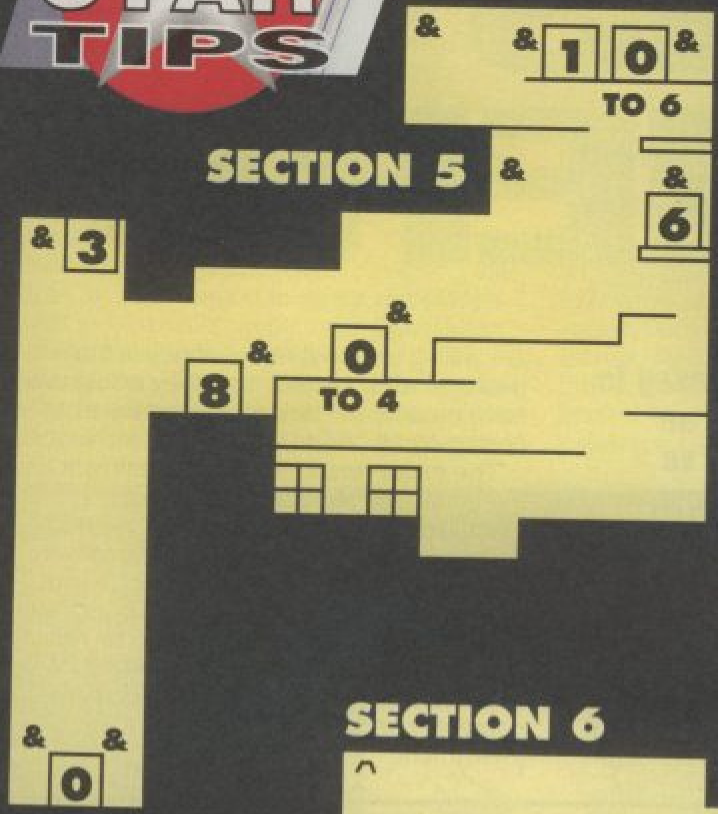
Round three
Generator

As soon as you appear on this screen run towards the 'engine', jump and somersault onto the back of it. Stay there, dodging the laser, you can only hit the enemy when the brain opens up. Then lob in two Mijin magic potions.



STAR TIPS

SECTION 5



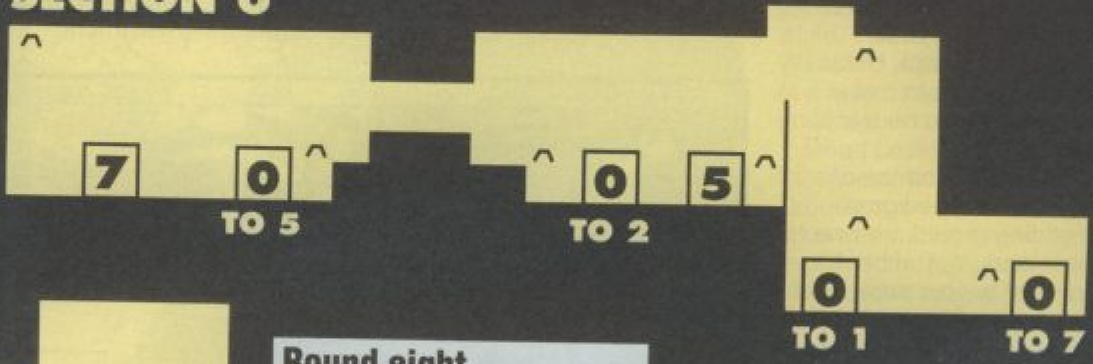
Round five — Armoured Truck

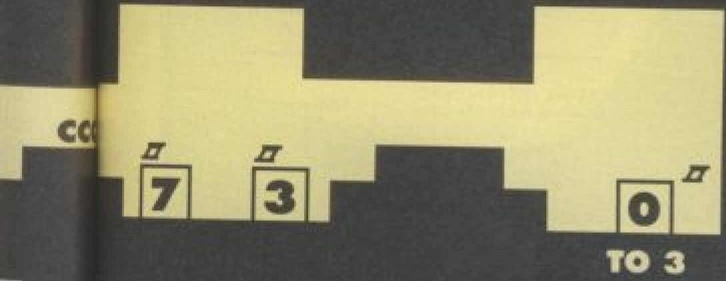
Duck down straight away and fire at the red globe, you will have to move now and then to avoid the electricity. If you are hit by an electric bolt your energy is depleted. When you've destroyed the globe proceed to the next one. Jump over it. Then stand beside it. You should be safe from the electric bolts. Now kick the globe until it explodes. The last globe is the hardest to destroy. Stand in the 'ditch', jump up and shoot at it while dodging the electric bolts. Each globe needs to be shot 12 times with normal shurikens or six times if you've got a power-up.

Round six — Spider-Man and Batman

By this stage of the game you should have accumulated enough lives to be able to waste a few. Use a Mijin magic potion on Spider-Man and he will be turned straight away into Batman. Otherwise you will have to shoot at him while he is crawling around the top of the screen. Once he has turned into Batman start shooting at the bats. Batman will then disappear off the top of the screen. Get ready to jump. As he comes flying in from the right side of the screen jump up and shoot at him. Repeat this procedure as he flies in from the left.

SECTION 6





Round eight Neo Zeed

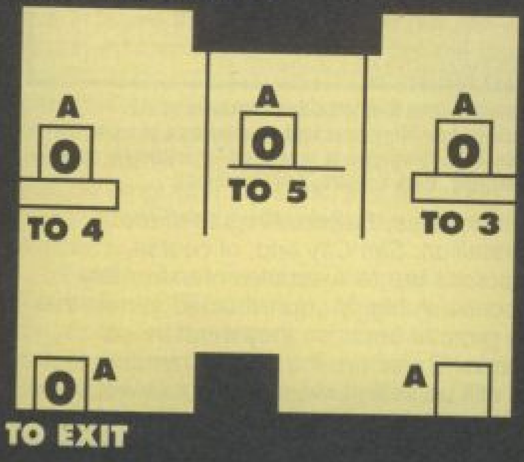
Only protection and mega-jump magic potions work on this screen. You can't really do anything until Neo Zeed starts to swing his hair. Walk up to him and kick him once then quickly walk away. He will then throw his hair at you. You can usually jump over it but sometimes he throws it high in which case duck down. When it returns to his head run back towards him and kick him again. Repeat this process until he's dead. Whilst fighting this bloke, your girlfriend runs around in a blind panic in the background. What appears to be a wall gradually descends on her. Shoot either of the black holes on either side of the screen to halt the wall for a short while. If you kill the ninja master before the wall crushes your girlfriend there's a happy ending but if your girlfriend gets flattened then it's all rather sad.

Round seven — Dinosaur

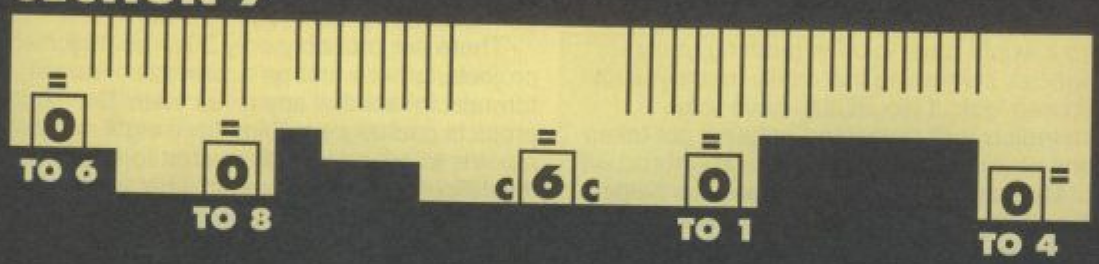
A quick way of destroying this monster is to throw three or four Mijin magic potions at him but as this is a waste of lives it should only be used as a last resort.

The heroes amongst you should start off by jumping onto the ledge and firing at the monster's head. When he looks as if he is going to spit fire at you jump down. His next burst will be aimed at the ground so jump back up onto the ledge and continue firing at his head. When he gets close enough for you to be able to kick him in the head, jump and somersault over the top of him. When you land, stand still and wait for him to approach you. When you hear the sound of thunder jump back over to the other side of the screen. Jump back onto the ledge and fire like crazy at his head. Don't worry about him spitting fire at you as you should be out of range. Depending on how quick you fire and how accurate your shots were you may have to repeat the process again. It takes approximately 20 shots with normal shurikens or 13 shots with a power-up to destroy him.

SECTION 8



SECTION 7



£50 SOFTWARE MUST BE WON!

Stuck for software? No cash? Well increase the size of your software collection by sending in all your game tips and cheats. Each month the sender of the best set of tips/cheats/maps wins a £50 software voucher and a free TGM T-shirt, complete with built-in street-cred enhancer. Send all your information to: Newsfield, Robin Candy's Tricks 'n' Cheats, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW.

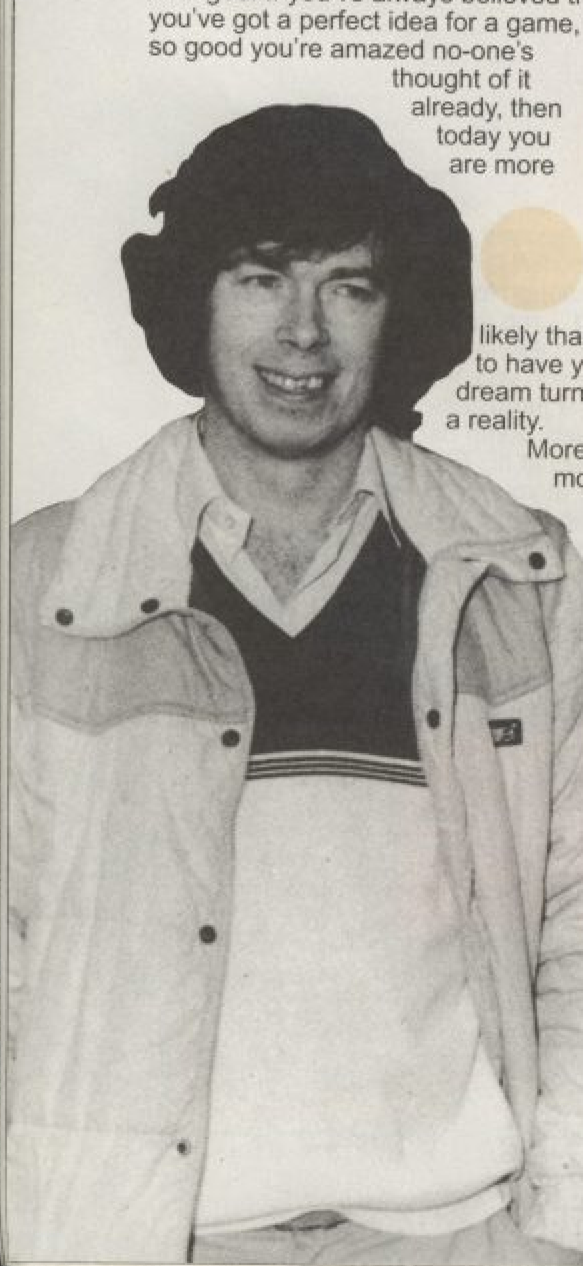
DESIGNS ON DESIGNERS

The excellence of games is no longer in the hands of the programmer. Machines are so powerful these days, that it's easy to write a game that's looks good and is well-implemented. It's no longer up to the programmers to amaze us with the way they've 'pushed the machine to its limits'. Because of this, people now, more than ever, want a decent game; well-designed and original. You don't need to be a number-cruncher to design a good game. Sean Kelly looks at the prospects for potential designers.

Ever thought you could create the perfect game, but are daunted by the thought of programming the video, never mind a computer? Until recently, this was a major problem. Unless you had the programming skills to make your game a reality, no software house would be interested.

Even then, to stand a good chance of publication you had to have a pedigree. Without a previous coding record, no-one was interested in your work, but without anyone taking an interest in your work, then you couldn't get a pedigree. Catch 22.

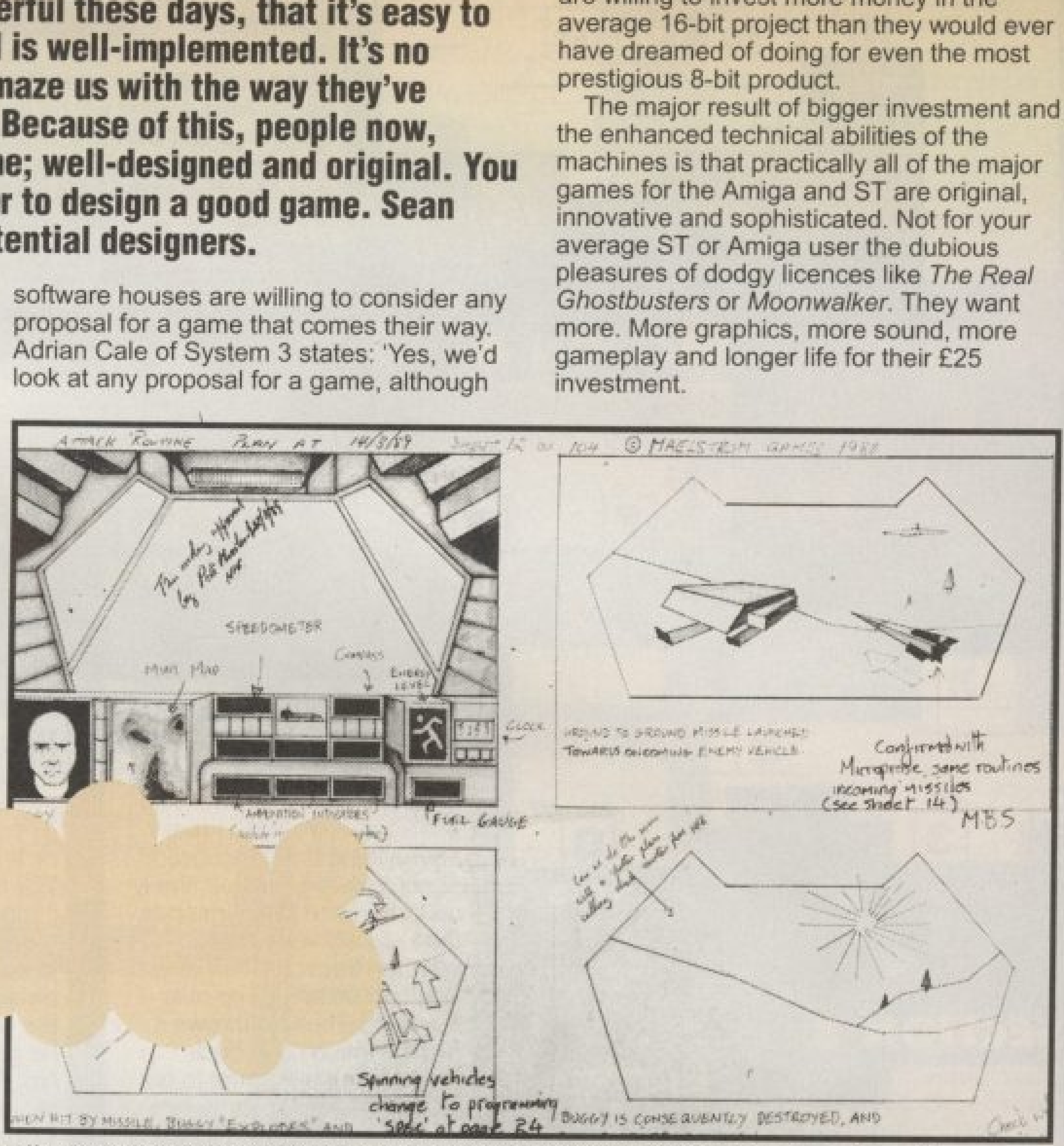
Over the last couple of years, however, computer gaming has changed, and the way in which games are created has also changed. If you've always believed that you've got a perfect idea for a game, one so good you're amazed no-one's thought of it already, then today you are more likely than ever to have your dream turned into a reality.



More and more software houses are willing to consider any proposal for a game that comes their way. Adrian Cale of System 3 states: 'Yes, we'd look at any proposal for a game, although we haven't picked up on any that have arrived in the post yet. The idea would have to be very good, and presented in the right manner — the presentation is every bit as important as the idea. We get stuff arriving on bits of paper, obviously ripped out of someone's maths book, and that stuff ends up straight in the bin.' Gremlin Graphics' Ian Stewart has already used a proposal from a non-programmer; *Footballer of the Year* just turned up one day and was quickly turned into a game. He echoes Adrian's views, adding 'You have to remember that we have probably ten game ideas every week, and so it would have to be something really special, something that really made you sit up and look. It would also have to be incredibly well presented before it got taken on.'

The advent of 16-bit software has helped the aspiring designer. The bigger profit potential means that the software houses are willing to invest more money in the average 16-bit project than they would ever have dreamed of doing for even the most prestigious 8-bit product.

The major result of bigger investment and the enhanced technical abilities of the machines is that practically all of the major games for the Amiga and ST are original, innovative and sophisticated. Not for your average ST or Amiga user the dubious pleasures of dodgy licences like *The Real Ghostbusters* or *Moonwalker*. They want more. More graphics, more sound, more gameplay and longer life for their £25 investment.



■ **Very early sketches from the attack scene in Microprose's Midwinter. Mike Singleton and members of his programming team Maelstrom approached Microprose with the game idea; Midwinter took several man years to complete once the game concept had been accepted by Microprose. Mike Singleton is renowned for brilliantly novel gaming concepts like Lords of Midnight, Doomdark's revenge, Whirligig, Dark Sceptre, and Grimblood.**

Interphase, Falcon, Knights of the Crystallion, Sim City and, of course, *Populous* are all examples of extremely successful, highly-sophisticated games that are popular because they meet these criteria. These are the sort of games that will still be selling months, even years, after their initial release, and it's this kind of game that the software houses are interested in producing. The change in game styles has effected how the games are created. Nigel Brookes, of Smart Egg Software, recently responsible for Ocean's Liverpool football game, takes up the story.

'There are probably only 20 or so major projects, games that go across six or seven formats, initiated in any given year. These projects can take anything from eight months to over a year from start to finish.' It's difficult enough to predict what will be selling in six months, let alone a year, so it's imperative that projects are kept to

schedule.

'Because the projects are much bigger and more sophisticated, different areas will be assigned to different people, each specialising in a particular area. There'll probably be a graphic artist, a coder, a sound effects and musical person, all possibly working on two or three format versions, and a games designer.' The jobs allocated to an individual will be fairly rigidly adhered to, because of the tight time schedules of projects, he says. 'The coder doesn't want to be stuck with designing the game, or be expected to design a detailed sprite in 15 running and jumping positions halfway through the schedule.'

Karl Jeffery takes it one stage further. Karl is the Software Manager at Images, who are responsible for, amongst other things, the stunning conversions of *R-Type*, and programming the forthcoming *Back to the Future* games for Mirrorsoft. He believes that in future the designer will be not just an important member of the team, but the team leader. In his opinion, future games will be predominantly dependent on the emergence of games designers, and he has recently started started employing games designers with no programming skills, just a stack of good game ideas and a determination to succeed.

'With the emergence of Compact Disc Interactive (CDI) software, there are no longer any real memory constraints, you can have over 500Mb on one disk. There's so much memory to play with, there's absolutely no real limitations, so the games design has to be brilliant. Members of teams programming for CDI games will obviously be specialists in one particular field, and someone has to be responsible for pulling the teams together, giving a project direction. That task will fall to the games designers.'

It's not just the smaller software houses and programming houses that are taking steps in this direction, though. In fact, MicroProse, renowned for high quality simulations and games, recently advertised for full-time designers, concerned exclusively with coming up with good game concepts. MicroProse's Martin Moth explained why they are taking this step.

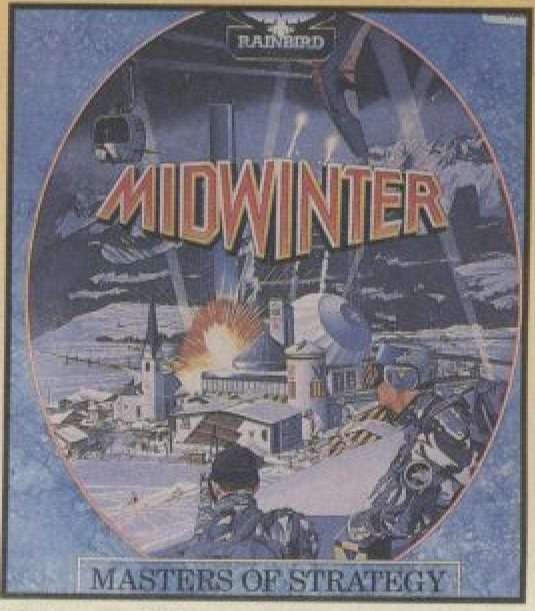
'The American MicroProse, based at Baltimore, has had two game designers, Sid Meyer and Arnold Hendrick, for quite some time now. This has had considerable success, and having just established a UK in-house development team, it seemed like the logical progression.

'The American designers' job is to come up with good game ideas, and then present the programmers for a particular project with a highly specific brief, indicating exactly what they want, soundwise, graphics wise, atmosphere — everything. One of our new games, *Railroad Tycoon*, was designed by Sid, and then programmed by someone he briefed. He thought that designing and building a huge railroad network could be the basis for a great game. He then set about deciding when and where the game would be set, what style of game it would be, and what the aim would be. He then briefed the programmers on the projects, and the results should be with us very soon.'

A recent addition to the ranks of British designers is Michael Clarke, who has just joined Images as a full-time game designer. 'I started designing bits and pieces about six years ago, for the Atari 800XL, and the CPC, but nothing that was published. Later I designed demos for friends. A while ago I noticed that there was quite a lot happening software wise where I live. So I put a package of about six rough game designs together, and posted out to everyone based around me. Images were one of the first people I sent my stuff to, and Karl Jeffrey called me up and asked me to come in for a chat. I joined Images a few weeks ago full-time, and have just completed designing the game for Mirrorsoft's *Back to the Future III*.



■ Midwinter in all its glory. From rough sketches to radical strategy action in a year. Midwinter's scenario is based on research carried out on the possibilities of a global freeze. In this case a meteorite crashes into Earth causing polar shifts. Unless such a disaster occurs, it looks very unlikely that an ice age will ever occur again.



■ All manner of things need to done when producing a game; coding is a small part. Game scenario, manual and packaging all play an important role.

That's going to be a massive game, it's much larger than *Back to the Future II*. I've just started working on a huge vector-based game that I've been designing for quite a while. The design for that ran to 400 pages.' What!!?? '400 pages! It's a big game. Some of it may have to be left out.' Hmmm. Very possibly.

Dean Lester has been designing games for several years now. He now works for Teque London, where a lot of his time is taken up putting game designs together. He explained how he originally got started.

'I'd coded a couple of games for Audiogenic on the BBC, while I was a trainee nurse. As a consequence of that I managed to get the 'tea boy' job at Audiogenic. It was there that I learned about design, and I ended up doing a couple of game designs for them...'

'From Audiogenic I moved to Mirrorsoft as a Project Manager... I did a couple of games for them that never got off the drawing board, including a vector car racing game months before *Hard Drivin'* even hit the arcades. Then I got involved in the *Interphase* project, which needed someone to push it along.' Dean worked on the Interphase project for six months, taking it to the highly successful conclusion. He then left Mirrorsoft to help set up Teque London, where a large proportion of his time is taken up with designing games, including the forthcoming Grandslam game *Hunt for Red October*.

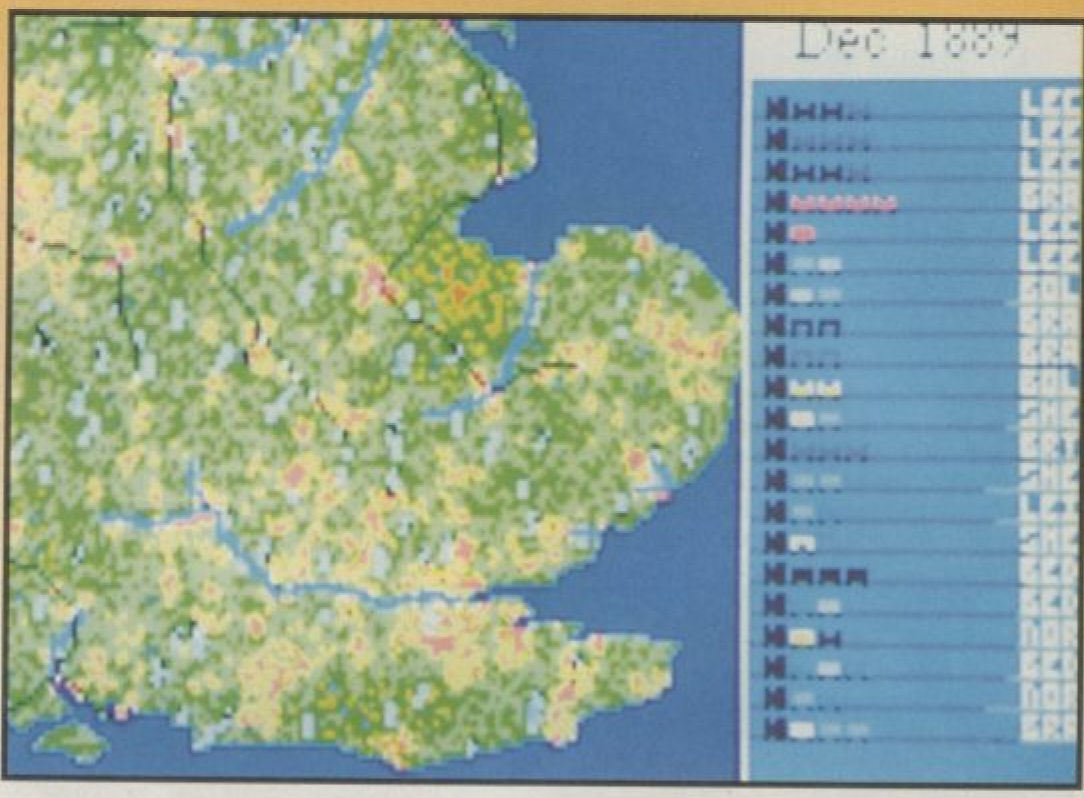
So how does Dean go about coming up with a game design? 'My starting point is always with a handful of games that are, in my opinion, the best games ever written. The first is *Mr Do*, the arcade machine. That has got the ultimate gameplay, simple graphics but incredibly playable. It's perfect. There's so much that any games designer can learn, like difficulty curves, extra features, keeping the eyes busy...' He rattles on about *Mr Do* for some considerable time before turning to his next choice, *Dungeon Master*. He also mentions *Bubble Bobble*, *Rainbow Islands*, *Elite*, *Joust* 'novel control

FROM PAPER TO PACKAGING — HOW TO PUT YOUR IDEA ONTO THE SHELVES

Be business-like in your approach to a software company. They expect — demand — that you've done some comprehensive background research, and taken time out to check your project's plausibility. Here's a few pointers to help you along the way to megabyte megalomania.

methods always make a game a bit more interesting' and *Arkanoid* before getting the plug for Teque in. '*Manchester United* is another of those games, like *Interphase*, that is a blend of strategy and an arcade game. It's difficult to do, but it manages to blend two distinctive styles of gameplay, rather than being two games for the price of one. It's great. When I'm designing games I think about all of these, they are, in a way, my mentors.'

The next step, having had an idea, is to put pen to paper to do basic design plan.'Firstly, you need to tell them what the graphic style will be — isometric, 2-D, first-person perspective, whether it's sprites or vectors. Next you include the game structure — how the levels build up, how many levels there are, what the aim on each level is. It also helps to give an indication of how the joystick or mouse will function. This gives someone an impression of how the game will play. It's also good to include some simple mock-up screens created on an art package. It doesn't have to be brilliant, but it does give some idea of what you are aiming at. A picture speaks a thousand words and all that... Within the first couple of pages, people should already have a pretty good mental picture of the game that you are proposing.'



■ Railroad Typcoon, one of Microprose's forthcoming releases, was thought up by American in-house designer Sid Meyer. The job of Microprose's in-house designers is to come up with good ideas, and then present the programmers for a particular project with a highly specified brief. Everything from the setting to the sound must be included in the brief. Sid thought that designing and building a great railway network could form the basis of a great game...

Once a game design has been commissioned, then it's time to extend the length of the design brief to 30 or 40 pages. 'By this stage, absolutely no design decisions should be left to the programmer. The whole artificial intelligence thing has to be included at this point, and nothing should be left out. When people play a game, they don't see this, but someone has sat down and worked out what everything onscreen will do in any instance. If an insect walks into a wall, then it backs up four character spaces before turning. If it bumps into another insect then it flies off at a different angle and so on. That's all got to be here, and the obvious things are sometimes the hardest.'

As a final addendum, Dean also likes to include 'extras', features that can be included if there is time or memory free. 'These are the types of things that can be included in the game, but that aren't an integral part of it. If you put these things in the main specification, then something important may be left out to include one of these 'decorations', and that would be wrong.'

Games designers are here to stay, and will play a large part in shaping the games of the future. Software houses are interested in the work of anyone with an accurate perception of what people will be playing in the future. Reckon you've got it? You could do a lot worse that enter the game designing competition in this issue of THE GAMES MACHINE. Even if you aren't successful then, there's still plenty of other opportunities. Back to Smart Egg's Nigel Brookes. 'One of the best things that could happen from a feature like this is for, in two or three months time, decent game ideas to suddenly start arriving in the post and ending up on my desk.' Well, what are you waiting for?

CASE HISTORY: MIDWINTER

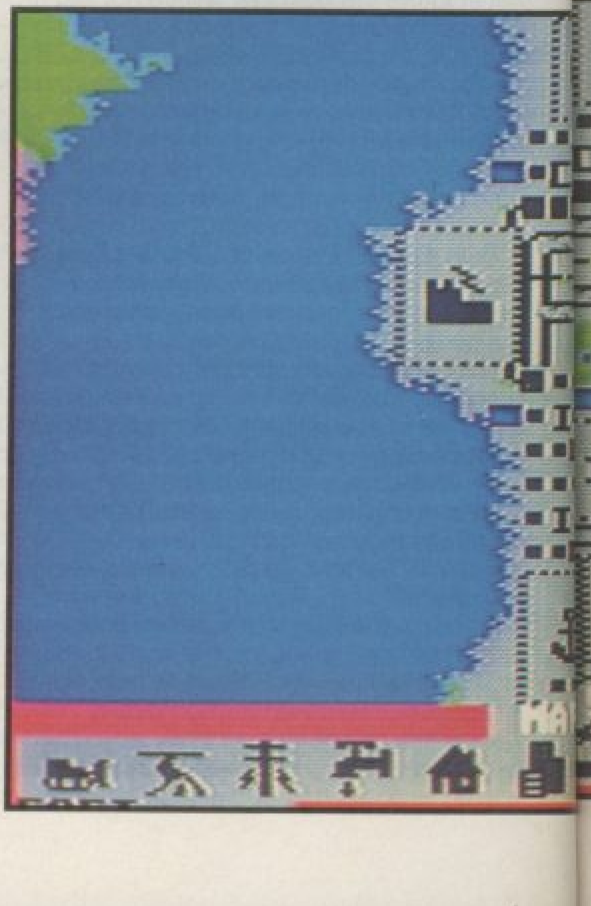
These two brief case histories should give you some idea of the part that the game designer plays in the evolution of a game, and the way in which a game moves from scrap paper to the local software emporium.

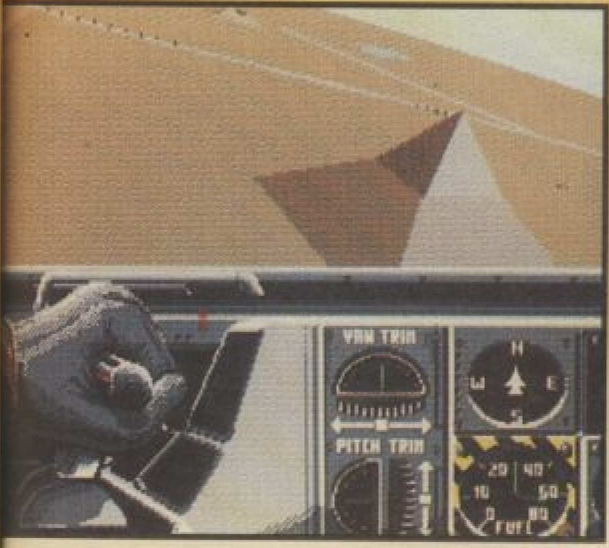
The original idea for *Midwinter* began in 1988 after Mike Singleton and the other programmers at Maelstrom had written a routine to scroll large solid vector objects around smoothly and fast. One of the objects Mike Singleton designed for a demo to show off this routine was a huge mountain with 96 faces, all programmed by hand. Mike wanted to incorporate his mountain into a game, and set about designing one, which was *Midwinter*. He then put it in with a number of other ideas for games he had, which he then presented to MicroProse. 'I wanted to do something more than just an arcade game. I wanted something like chess, which is fun because you have a number of pieces to move around the board — playing chess with just one piece each is bound to be dead boring. Same with *Midwinter*, I wanted a game that involved moving a number of characters around, without losing any time by moving all of them.'

At this stage, the game proposal was only about two pages long, detailing how the game would evolve and what would happen. Out of the number of briefs Maelstrom presented, this was the one which MicroProse were really into doing, and so Mike had to come up with a more specific brief. 'This was around forty to fifty text heavy DTP'd pages in length, concentrating on screen layout, display, how many characters there would be and how they would interact.'

Once this had been given the go ahead, a team of nine or ten (Mike, mathematical genius that he is, couldn't remember exactly how many) programmers set to work on the project. From this point onwards, the project evolved along natural lines, although some changes had to be made. 'We had planned to have some displays for refuelling vehicles, or collecting supplies, but then we realised that once you had made the decision to refuel or collect supplies, there wasn't much else to do. As a consequence we decided these displays would have been pretty pointless.'

Of course the project has evolved and changed in other respects, the changes coming about due to machine limitations, expendability or following mutual discussion between Maelstrom and MicroProse, who were, of course, keeping an eye on the project. The project is just about finished now, and should be hitting the shelves any moment.





■ The bigger profit potential of 16-bit games means that software houses are willing to invest more money. The result of bigger investment means more innovative and sophisticated games like Falcon for the ST above.

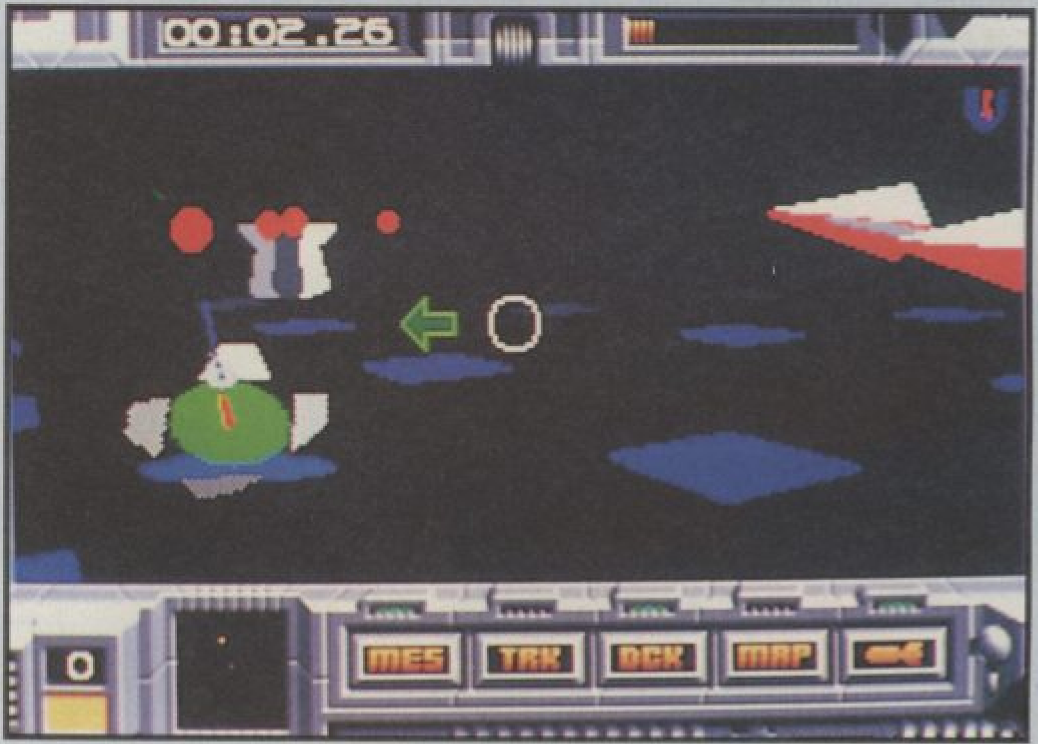
CASE HISTORY:INTERPHASE

Cyberpunk is go! Another massive computer game, this time owing more than a little to *Neuromancer* by William Gibson.

'Wouldn't it be good to base a computer game around the sort of events in *Neuromancer*,' said Simon Knight, having just read the novel. 'Yes, lovely,' said everyone else at Mirrorsoft, forgetting for a moment that everyone had other more pressing projects to be working on. Practically simultaneously, Adrian Stephens turned up with some totally brilliant 3-D routines, and no game to put them in. Perfect, said Mirrorsoft, you can do our new cyberpunk game *Mainframe*. As a consequence, *Mainframe* had a coder, a basic idea, and no game designer.

Enter Dean Lester, who had just joined Mirrorsoft as a project manager. 'I'll design it,' he said, and he did, spending two days of every week for the next six months travelling down to Bristol, where Adrian was doing the coding. Although they had a pretty good idea of what the game they wanted was like, it evolved during the coding period. 'You can't have a totally inflexible plan, it must be flexible enough to evolve. You'll often find that a good idea will come from following what can ultimately be a totally pointless path.' The two days would be spent coming up with new ideas, improvements and alterations, and the remaining three would be used by Adrian to implement the modernisations. 'I know he's a mate and everything,' says Dean 'but he really is an absolute coding genius. I'd say 'Wouldn't it be good if the tractor beam could pick up this or that,' and then half an hour later he'd have it coded in, and half an hour after that it'd be working perfectly, debugged and all.'

Then, Danny Emmet turned up with some designs for objects and characters for a 3-D environment, offering to do the designs for any projects. It just happened that they were perfect for *Mainframe*, so he was brought in on the project, and ended up putting a lot of his own creative input into the game. 'A lot of the quirkiness that's in the game, like the unicycling frog, were all down to Danny,' says Dean.



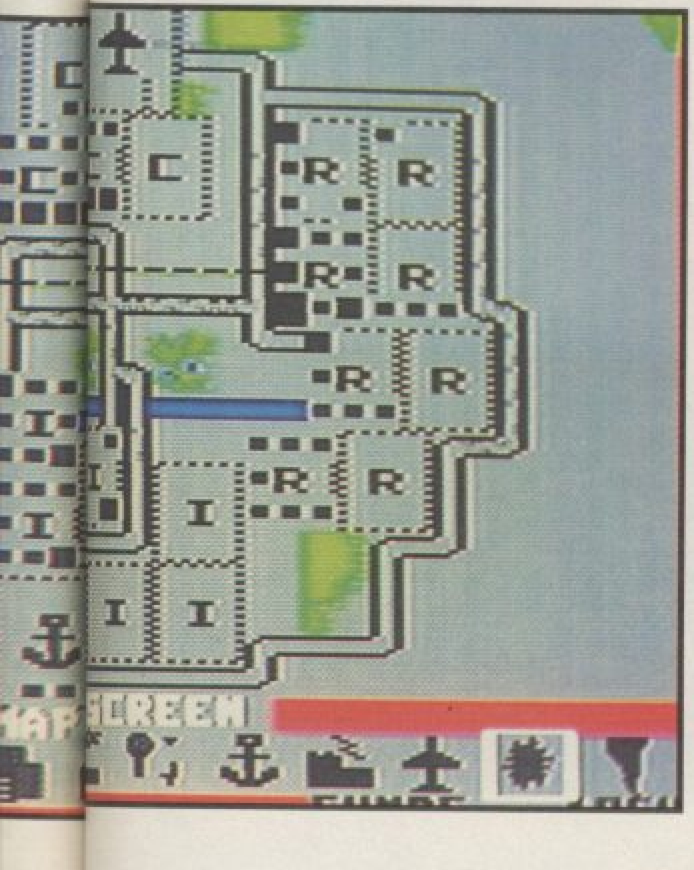
PART ONE: THE IDEA

Have a stunning idea that no-one has thought of before. This is the most difficult bit. Once you are convinced that you have one, try to figure out why no-one's thought of it before. Look at all the other games that have anything in common with your game. Try to figure why they didn't implement the features you want in yours.

Familiarise yourself with the rudiments of the machine you are designing for. Take into account the fact that the ST isn't so hot on scrolling, that even the most stunning game on the Speccy, even if it's the best ever, isn't going to sell if it needs a cassette load every other minute.

Think about the sales. If it's yet another driving game or beat-'em-up, it's going to be sitting on a shelf with ten or 20 similar games. Software houses are interested games that will not have to share space with another similar title from another producer.

■ Sim City is an original game concept that will doubtless remain on the shelves long after the likes of Rainbow Islands, Dragon's Lair II and Turrican have been forgotten. Sim City is the sort of game that will be selling months, even years, after its release — and its the sort of game software houses are very interested in producing at the moment.



A game's more saleable if it can go across a number of formats and still retain the playability. (*Stunt Car Racer* and *X-Out* are both good examples of this.) If your game is available on five formats, as well as increasing your royalties five-fold, you're going to increase the profits for the software house five-fold. Software houses are interested in this kind of thing as well!

PART TWO: PRESENTING YOUR IDEA

Every software house I spoke to asked for excellent presentation. Make sure that what you send to the software houses is going to give them an accurate impression of your game. Take care to include as many details as possible, without going into waffle.

They'll want to know what machine or machines it's aimed at, who's going to buy it, the number of levels or sections, what a typical game might consist of, and drawings of screen layouts. If it's something like *Oil Imperium*, where turns are taken along with other computer-generated players, then a flow chart indicating the options and actions of a typical game will help. If you expect a software house to take your idea seriously, then you will have developed it to the stage where around five or so pages of diagrams and words will be needed to give the details and an accurate idea of how the game will play, look, sound, and feel.

Having done all that, the next thing is to do it all over again. As Ian Stewart at Gremlin says; they have ten ideas a week, and the chances of your one idea being good enough to make it are slim. Even the professionals probably only see one idea in ten make it onto the shelves. So, if you send in ten designs, you're ten times more likely to succeed. No-one said it was going to be easy, but the potential rewards — fame, money, lunches at the software house's expense — will more than make up for it.

OUR MAN IN Japan

Far, far away, in a distant galaxy their lived a wise old console. The console spread its teachings across all lands, through all cultures and into the homes of all those who would receive him favourably. There were few who refused his didactic teachings — they became outcasts, known as Segas. In the third century, the chief console, Engine, sent out his sidekick, Shintaro Kanaoya, with news of his latest creation, and one that could revolutionise the way the Engine was perceived throughout the land...

Today's lesson is taken from Our Man in Japan, Issue 30. And from the east, a bright new star rose over the horizon. It was no ordinary star, t'was dark, almost grey, with strange obtrusions. And so men, women and children came forward in their multitudes, playing these wonderful Engines, as they were to become known. But how could this be? From where were these beasts gaining their life juice? (For there were no electric sockets in the desert.) Each possessed not the legendary TV screen, or even a new-fangled monitor, but a strange display made from liquid crystal. And so started the fifth coming of our lord, PC Engine. And the lord bellowed: 'I am hand-held'.

Yes, it's totally and utterly true. The PC Engine has become hand-held. Not just an ordinary hand-held — it wouldn't be like NEC to obey the laws of research and development — but one that can be expanded in two very important ways. Not only is every machine totally compatible with all existing ROM-card software, but each could also have a built-in TV tuner. (Other sockets allow two hand-helds to be connected together, and audio output through headphones.) The tuner could be a real advance in personal entertainment. Just imagine being able to play Gunhed on the train and then flick to watching Neighbours on the same little screen. However, the tuner bit is still a possibility — not even a probability — as NEC have yet to set a price. They have said that it won't top £220, which means the TV could have to go. This is mainly due to the fact that it's probably coming out the same time as the Nintendo Super Famicon, which is around £200, too.



ANY MORE ENGINES?

There's still uncertainty about the 'real' fifth PC Engine. NEC have denied to comment on whether they'll be upgrading the original Engine with 16-bit technology — don't forget, the Super Grafx is only 8-bit. And there's also the matter of the LCD add-on screen for the old Engine. With the advent of the hand-held it seems unlikely that NEC will release this. More's the pity.

Still, don't fret, there's plenty of games to keep you going over the next few months. Take Afterburner, for example. In Japan alone, it's the sixth incarnation of the game: the original arcade, the Sega 8-bit, the Nintendo 8-bit, the X68000 and the FM Towns preceding it. Expect the Engine version within the next few months.

Oh, no. Shock, horror. Jason's back. Well, actually the character's name is Rick and this time, you control him. The game is another arcade conversion, Splatterhouse. Nice graphics, bad guys called Top-Heavy, Torture Dead, Green Dead Man, Body Eaters, Hanging Dead, etc, all appear on April 3 in Japan.

SOMETHING ORIGINAL!

Here's something really original. You're a robot, you run up the screen killing bad monsters. There are extra weapons and power gas as you go. It comes out early April. It's called Psycho Chaser.

Britain: The home of so many things. Here's one now: soccer. In fact it's Formation Soccer Human Cup 90. From a total of 16 national teams, Japan being the weakest, play countries from all over the world. This game is radically different from most other games in that up to four players can play at the same time; two people controlling two members of one team and two others controlling two opposition members.

The game of football originated in England way back in... Nah, I'll leave the history lesson for another time. Anyway, prepare for your own World Cup in April.

TGM looked at the Sega Mega Drive version of Golden Axe back in Issue 29. One drawback to the Engine version is that it's only available on CD. Great if you've a CD-ROM but not much use to the majority.

Also on the CD-ROM is Ultra Box. It's not a game, not a way of life, but a disc full of bits and pieces. Interesting things like a horoscope, little picture puzzles, a small game, a list of Engine products and other very useful things. The most interesting item is a 'foreigner chat-up simulation'. Can you chat-up a foreigner with your English? All this for only £20. God help Japan...

One last game, on the 8-bit Nintendo, is the brilliant Boulderdash. Unfortunately, there's no Rockford! It just won't be the same.

Well, my children, here endeth the lesson. But I will return in 30 days to bring forth further tidings of that nether world to your east. But for now, Your Man in Japan sends his eternal blessings. Amen and Sayonara.

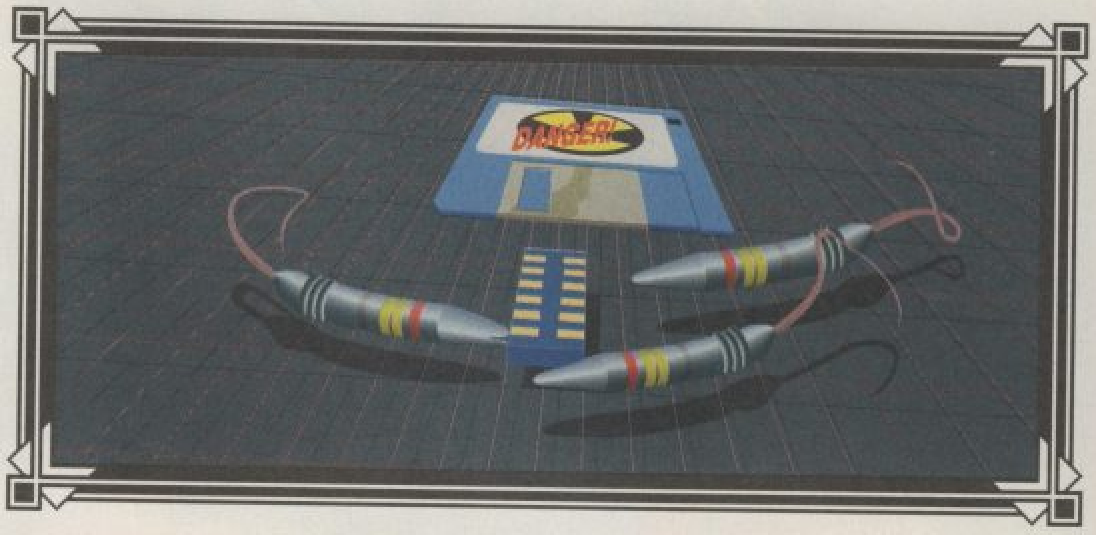


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VENDETTA
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Objective...Prepare Your Players For The
Ultimate Experience To Come...STOP
metamorphasised into an Amiga overnight. Yes, the graphics are that impressive.'
Ace
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The Games machine GALLERY

Here Kean has attempted to tackle the current *bete noire* of the computer world. Viruses, the hermetic menaces, waiting unseen, only to strike at critical moments, robbing us of our data. A cathartic piece for Kean, himself a victim of a computer virus, Health Scare gives shape and form to our fears. And by exposing them for what they really are — lamentable progeny of a deranged programmer's mind — Kean shows us that only by facing up to our fears can we overcome them and move onto better things.

Never let it be said that TGM doesn't bow to reader pressure. Early results from the TGM Questionnaire show that you all like graphics features, so that's what you're going to get. This month sees the start of the TGM Gallery. We want to see your artwork in these pages. Of course a straightforward art gallery would be a bit boring so we thought we'd add a new twist...

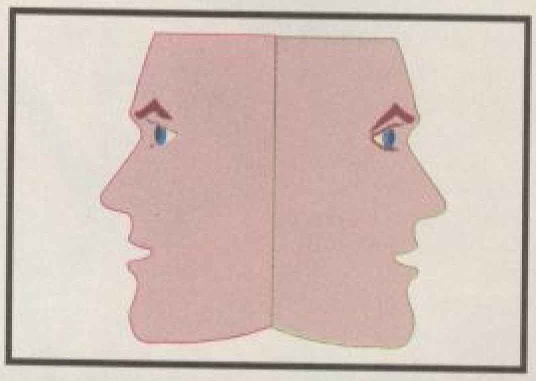


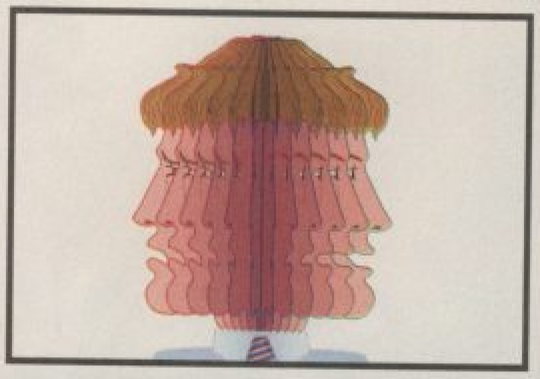
HEALTH SCARE

As well as your main picture we'd like to see several other screens showing the different design stages and techniques used. That way your artwork gets immortalised in these hallowed pages *and* you help out other readers. And if that wasn't incentive enough, the designer of the month's best screen will receive a £50 software voucher.

To begin with, we only want screens on the Amiga, ST or PC. If all goes well, we'll include 8-bit artwork. Send all your disks to: *Newsfield, TGM Gallery, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW*. Enclose a SAE if you want to see your disks again.

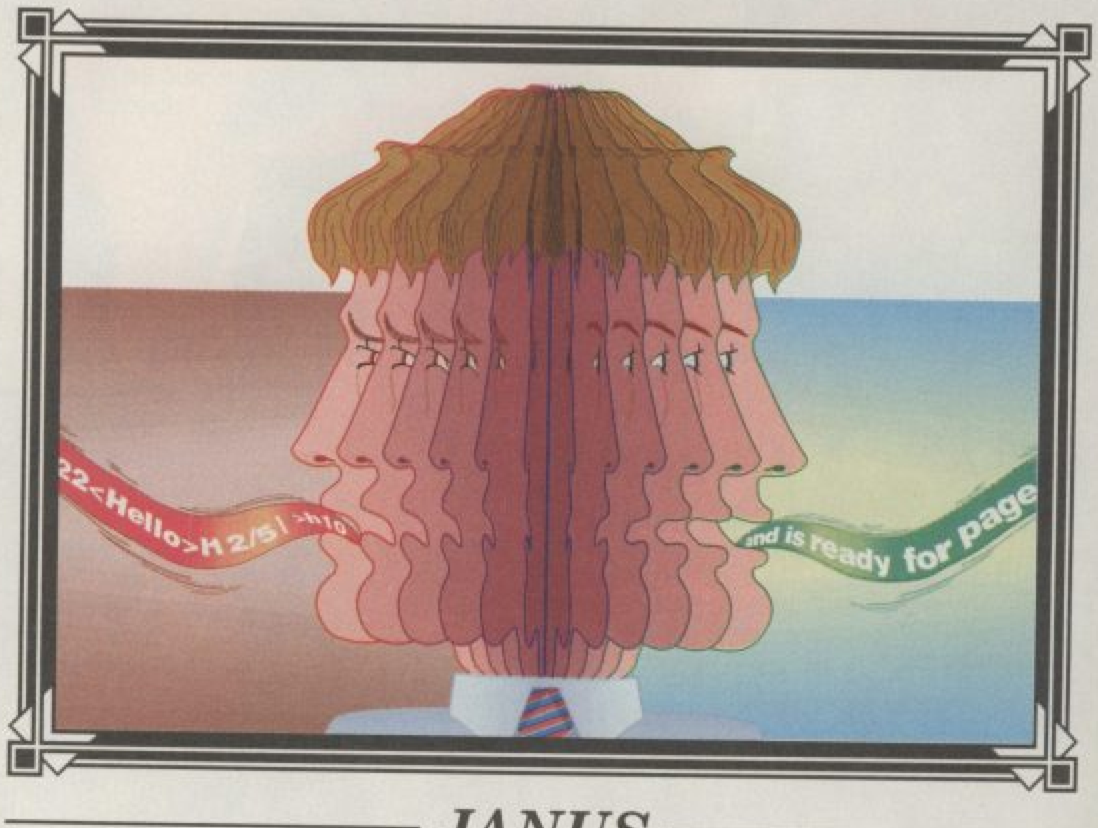
To kick off the column, we invited Macintosh Master Roger Kean to supply some hi-tech designs, and top art critic Brigitte Van Reuben to explain why they're not very good...





JANUS

Stooping into Roman mythology, Kean has dragged the god Janus, through the ages, into a 20th century setting. Utilising repeat imagery, a la Warhol pop art, Kean has constructed a startling, yet simple, image. The shirt and tie serve to add a more down to earth element to the deity. Just as the shirt and tie are products of man's inventiveness, so is Janus. And just as clothes are necessary for our physical well being, a god is necessary for our spiritual development. They provide us with a *raison d'etre*, a focus for our lives. Here Kean is echoing Voltaire. The image is essentially saying that 'If god did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.'



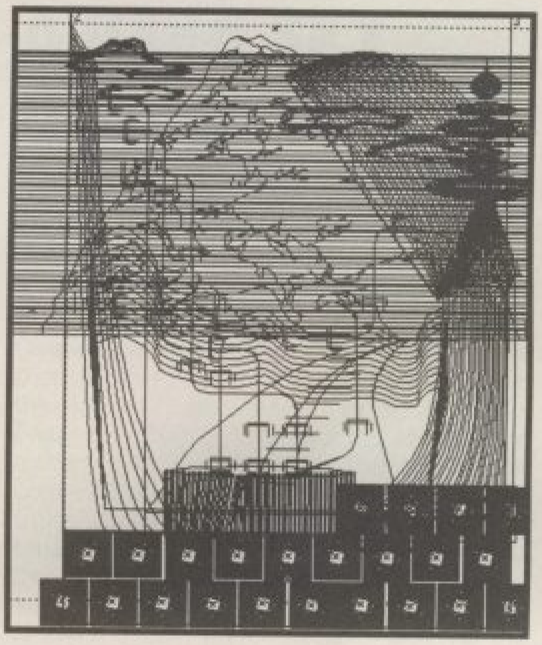
JANUS



Here Kean has mixed hi-tech with the more natural concerns of Green politics. The Keep Out sign, more of a question than a statement, raises the issue of whether man can co-exist in harmony with nature or, rather, whether industrial society can.

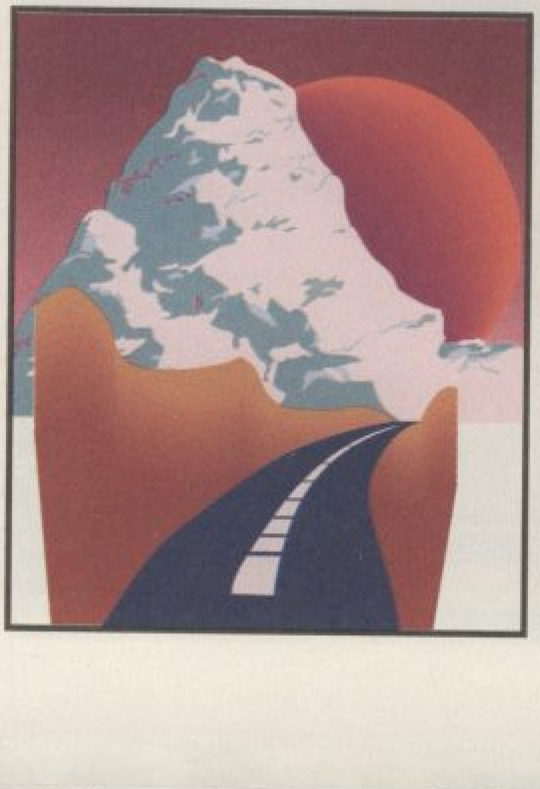
The irony is that an industrial society is supposed to enrich our lives with its productivity. But isn't it ultimately destructive? Are we not in fact destroying our planet and ourselves? And for what? Such transitory pleasures as frozen food. In the foreground stands Man — represented by his brutal inventions; stark piping and crude metallic tiling — defiantly in the background Nature with her unconquered peaks. The two contrasts sizing each other up like prize fighters ready for the final showdown.

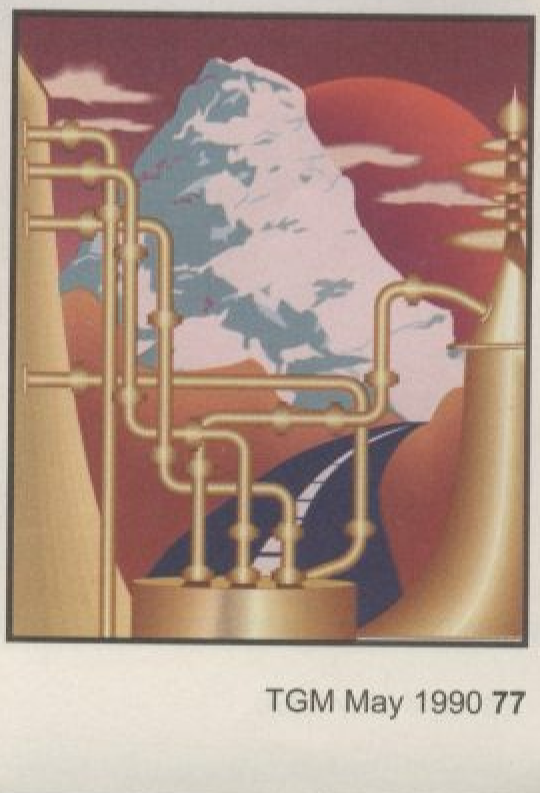
The man-made road between them suggests that man and his machines are about to march on nature's last reserves. But peering out from behind the mountain a ray of sunshine staving off the imminent doom, literally a ray of hope. Representing the increased profile of Green politics, the underlying statement of the piece is all bound up with that ray of light, that man must treasure nature for what it is, rather than raping it for its treasures.



THE MOUNTAIN







Home-produced software is making a comeback. Some of the best, and cheapest, adventures could well be designed by the guy (or gal) next door. Paul Rigby is one of its biggest supporters...

Novelty Corner

The ADVENTURE STRATEGY ROLEPLAY Column

Now here's a novelty. Tevex, one of America's most well-known computer retail outlets, have launched themselves into the software business. The game is called *Napoleon at Austerlitz* and follows the classic style of wargame, the look-down SSI type. Apparently, Tevex were so concerned with the dearth of new wargame titles that they thought they'd give the genre a bit of a lift. Watch out for a review of the PC version in the near future.

Talking about novelty, American software house, Miles Computing, have produced an interesting game known as *The Fool's Errand*. The plot surrounds a fool who is in search of wisdom. The game includes over 80 puzzles, sub-games in themselves. The difference being that each puzzle is interwoven into the overall plot which is revealed as you complete each puzzle. I've heard that *The Fool's Errand*, a favourite of ex-Infocom man Steve Meretsky, is a tough nut to crack but your hard-earned efforts are well rewarded with a closing four-minute animation sequence. A PC version is winging its way towards me, via carrier pigeon, as you read these words.

General Quarters Software, who hail from sunny California, are a new name to me. Their first product, *Midway: The Battle That Doomed Japan*, is an operational level simulation for the PC that includes all surface ships from destroyer upwards (including land/sea air wings). The play map reaches from the Japanese mainland to Pearl Harbour. Features include three different types of detection: airborne recce, visual or radar as well as surface, and sub-sightings. Weather is variable, aircraft have to fuelled and pre-flighted, and so on.

LARRY LAND

Larry Horsfield, the force behind FSF Adventures and author of *Magnetic Moon* and *Starship Quest* (reviewed in issue 28) has announced that his next release, *Axe of Kolt*, will have a whopping £50.00 prize for the first person to complete it. Anybody who wishes to place an advanced order with Larry should contact him at *40 Harvey Gardens, Charlton, London SE7 8AJ.*

Issue four of the first adventure mag on a disk, *Syntax*, has crossed my palm. Edited by Sue Medley, the latest issue includes an interview with *Let Sleeping Gods Lie* author, Steven Green. In addition there are reviews; *Adventure Game Toolkit, Darkness is Forever, Suicide or Murder* and *Dead End*; hints and tips, solutions and lots of other good stuff. One issue costs £3.50, with a year's sub at £20.00. Interested? Contact Sue Medley, *9 Warwick Road, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6LJ.*

On the subject of mags, Issue Nine of Official Secret's *Confidential* has just arrived, and a rattling good read it is too. Interviews with Linda Wright and Anita Sinclair, a beginners' guide to adventuring and a look at the new MUG game, *Mirrorworld*...

This is a good time to mention a letter I received from New Zealand — TGM has infiltrated more countries than the KGB. Chang is desperate for comprehensive help on Sierra's *Space Quest 3*. Well, contact Intermediates at *PO Box 847, Harlow CM21 9PH.* (Tel: 0279 600197.) They've a *SQ3* hint book for £6.99, which also includes help on many other games.

CONVERSION SWAMP

Swamped by conversions again. Goodness knows where they come from. (Programmers, probably — Ed.) The Amiga version of *Dungeon Master's Assistant: Encounters* from SSI has arrived. Used specifically as a number-cruncher for tabletop AD&D RPGs, the *DMA* includes over 1300 monsters and characters from Monster Manuals one and two. The ST version of Origin's *Windwalker* has also appeared. Packed onto three disks *Windwalker* is STE compatible.

The PC version of Interplay's *Dragon Wars* (£29.99) is now available. This version really shows what the system can do as it is freed from the shackles of the C64's disk drive. Pity the dungeon walls are paper-thin, though. PSS's *Conflict Europe* has also made it to the PC. My lukewarm reception of this game has grown distinctly colder for the PC version where it mixes with the big boys and comes off with a bloody nose...

Finally, a word about two cracking adventures I have been playing on my Amiga. Both are text-only, both are by Jim MacBrayne and both are Public Domain. The first is *The Golden Fleece* and the other *The Holy Grail*. The titles are self-explanatory. But what they don't tell you is the wealth of text, atmosphere and mind-bending puzzles they offer. In fact *The Holy Grail* is for 1Mb Amigas only!

(Don't forget this is a text-only adventure!) The style is very Infocom-like, which is no drawback, but the author's own style is the solid foundation to both games. My examples emerged from 17Bit Software, *PO Box 97, Wakefield, WF1 1XX*. (Tel: 0924 366982.) Both games cost a piffling £2.50. I wholeheartedly, unreservedly... oh, just buy them!

Right, that's all for this month. I'm off to write a letter to the Editor asking for a pair of long johns. It's ruddy freezing sitting on the top of this column. My word processor's iced up and the ten million pigeon inhabitants are causing merry hell with my floppies — it's like Christmas every day of the year...

PAUL RIGBY, NEWSFIELD, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1JW.

All import games reviewed this month can be obtained from Computer Adventure World, *318 Kensington, Liverpool L7 0EY.* Tel: 051 2636306.

C64

WAR OF THE LANCE

SSI

War of the Lance is SSI's first AD&D *war*game. It keeps faithful to the original books — a rather unique occurrence for a wargame.

The basis of the plot surrounds the attack from the armies of the Queen of Darkness on the lands of Ansalon. All aspects of combat are involved; including draconians, dragons and fleets. An additional element is used by both sides via the well-known characters of the books who quest for precious objects which may (or may not) enhance the performance of their respective armies. Each bunch of questors can be hampered by the subversive moves of their opponents. If, by some unfortunate chance, one of your questors is captured, you can order the others to rescue them. Questors also risk injury or death which may slow down the group to varying degrees.

I would have liked to have had more control on the questors. Success or failure at finding objects is too random for my liking. Control could also prevent capture or premature death.

It would also have been beneficial to have direct tactical control, especially during those tempting battle close-ups. Such control would not be unreasonable in this particular game because you do not play any one leader. Realism, therefore, would not be affected.

Nevertheless, I thoroughly recommend *War of the Lance* to any wargamer out there and any adventurers who may like to get into wargames but are cautious of the genre. The inclusion of text screens giving story updates and the wealth of background provided by the TSR Dragon Lance books really helps the atmosphere. Well done, SSI. More please!

STRATEGY 84%

PC £24.99, C64 £18.99

PANZER BATTLES

SSG

Panzer Battles is from the Battlefront series. Utilising six battles along the Russian front, you play either the German or Russian side. Scenarios cover Minsk (June 27, 1941), Moscow (December 4, 1941), Kharkov (May 12, 1942), Prokhorova (June 12, 1943), Kanev (September 23, 1943) and Korsun (February 10, 1944). Each scenario has a range of suggested variants to extend gameplay even further.

The Battlefront system is by no means state of the art, even though it has been constantly upgraded. However, there is still plenty to keep you occupied. Incidentally, any SSG wargamers would do well to ring Electronic Arts on 0753 49442 to enquire about SSG's own propriety *Run 5* magazine. No doubt further scenarios for Panzer Battles will be offered in this publication.

STRATEGY 77%

ST £29.95

RINGS OF MEDUSA

Starbyte

Your are a prince in search of five rings needed to summon the goddess Medusa who is spreading evil throughout the land with the help of her 'hell army'. Only after Medusa is summoned do you have the chance to defeat her in combat. However, after every ring is found you gain an extra advantage — increased army strength, for example. Trouble is, you start with nothing but a small amount of money and a few wagons. You need, therefore, to increase your dosh, raise an army, attack a few castles, sink a few ships, while juggling with the economic side of affairs.

In fact the main strength of *Medusa* is in its handling of the economics. There is quite a bit of trading, mining, wages, transport and so on. Scouts can be used to look for raw materials or check out a nearby army. The terrain has an effect on transport and combat. For example, your army will sink in swamps without much-needed help from magic users.

When you enter a town you can buy and sell various items (food, weapons, etc), gamble in the tavern, enlist personnel, etc. Combat is poorly implemented. Apart from the general lack of information, you have very little control and tactics are unvaried.

Finally, the product is too expensive — especially considering the opposition.

STRATEGY 44%

ST, C64

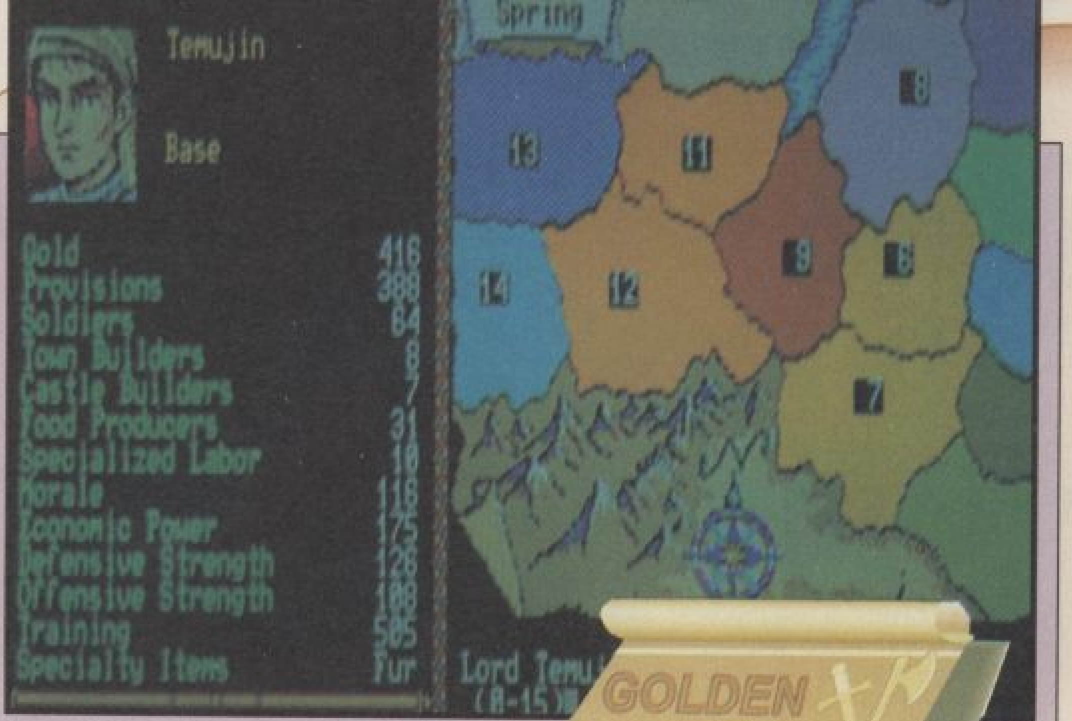
A DARK SKY OVER PARADISE

Interactive Technology, PO Box 146, Sheffield S13 7TY.

A curious graphic adventure game this. The Earth is in a bit of trouble. Overcrowding, ecological disaster and all that. So the plan is to colonise Mars from the Moon headquarters. Here, a rocket base is being constructed. However, money is a big problem. The bill for the colonisation plans threatens to fling the Earth into a massive economic recession. Meanwhile, you have been summoned to the Moonbase. Why? You've no idea. But when you arrive at Moonbase you're quickly made aware of the unstable nature of the society you find yourself in. Curfews, bombings, intrigue and so on.

Dark Sky is a well-presented game with a short, nicely-produced manual and digi-





PC £49.50 (also Amiga) import

GENGHIS KHAN

Koei

Genghis Khan is really two games in one. In the solitaire mode, Mongol Conquest, you can become Temujin, the Bordighin tribesman who is destined to unite the Mongols as Genghis Khan. The game then switches to the World Conquest mode which can be played with one to four players. Other notable characters include Richard I (England), Alexious III (Byzantine Empire), and Minamoto Yoritomo (Japan).

Using a similar design to Koei's previous release, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (a game well received in the Column), *Genghis Khan* improves further still. All command decisions cost attribute points. Your character has a range of abilities: judgement, leadership, planning, persuasion and on. When an action is made which utilises one of these abilities it reduces the points allocated. When the points fall under a certain level you will be unable to do the action. This means that you will need a fair sprinkling of several abilities before you charge into battle, for example. You could say that this area of the game accurately reflects the pressures of leadership.

Genghis Khan is an excellent product. It's kept me up late more times than I care to mention. The challenge of the game is high as the opponents are no fools. They love to attack when you are at your weakest, opponent tactics are intelligent too. Despite the high price this is unreservedly recommended.

STRATEGY 93%

tised graphics for the ST version. The initial gameplay is frustrating as you need to keep a number of timed appointments. However, you will find yourself becoming lost while you desperately map out the area, trying to find the necessary locations. Death and missed appointments will mean that you will need to re-boot a few times while you complete your map. Surely a fully detailed map should have been included? In addition, the parser can be quite unfriendly and unhelpful. Precise inputs are the order of the day.

The main saviour of this game is the plot which is fascinating. The story keeps you guessing and bewildered at times, especially the dream sequence. Even so, there are enough hooks to make you want to press on. It's just a pity that the basic design of the adventure isn't a bit friendlier.

HOMEGROWN 72%



PC £59.95 import

STAR SAGA 2 THE CLATHRAN MENACE

Masterplay

The second in the planned trilogy (the first was reviewed in September 1989), *Star Saga 2* brings the horror of an absolutely gigantic Clathran space fleet storming through the known universe crushing everything in their path. You're an intrepid starship pilot and you are our only hope. For hidden in them thar planets is the secret to destroy the Clathrans. To find the secret involves exploring umpteen planets, interacting with alien species, manipulating objects and dabbling in a bit of combat.

The Star Saga series breaks all the rules, it's a whole new genre of gaming as it uses the first true, customised expert system designed specifically for commercial leisure purposes. It is text-only and playing it can only be described as reading an interactive novel mixed with playing a boardgame, an RPG and a standard adventure and probably a few other things too.

The text comes in six character booklets and 14 game text booklets (containing 50,000 paragraphs!). This game is, in a word, BIG! The story is well-written and atmospheric, there is an excellent interactive system and an economic element incorporating trade. My only grumble is that the combat (which plays a greater role in this sequel) is too automated by the computer. You do have a variety of options — it's just that I would have liked more. The author, understandably, argues that greater player control would mean each player hogging the computer for too long. Find out for yourself...

RPG 87%

PC import

THE SCOOP

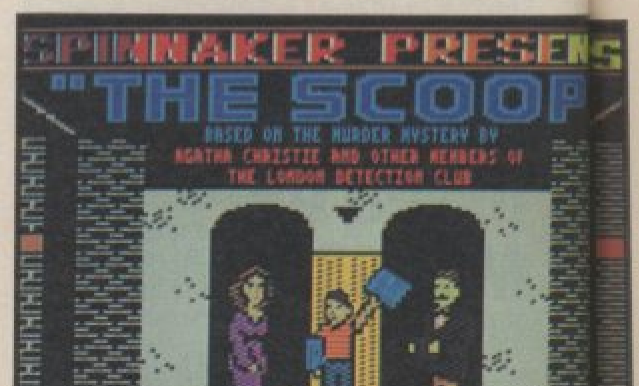
Spinnaker

Set in the Thirties, *The Scoop* is a murder mystery, graphic adventure. The story is based on a novel written by members of the London Detection Club (headed by Agatha Christie, no less).

You play a crime reporter set to search for the scoop story which will put your troubled newspaper back on its feet. The convenient murder surrounds a lady, Geraldine Tracey, who was found stabbed to death in her bungalow. In fact, you are provided with a front page replica of a Morning Star newspaper which includes details of the murder. Missing are the murder weapon and... her husband (sound of dramatic chord)! Strange that the Morning Star reporter, sent to cover the murder story, has also been found murdered in a phone box. This is where you come in...

There are few problems with *The Scoop*. Criticisms include you having to be at certain locations at the right time to obtain a certain clue or find a certain witness and the time limit which is more of a personal hate rather than a design fault. However, I enjoyed this game and recommend it to any mystery fans out there.

ADVENTURE 76%



■ Murder, mystery and suspense are a daily occurance in a hack's life but can you solve crime and earn yourself the all important Scoop?

PC import

HIDDEN AGENDA

Springboard

Fancy becoming El Presidente of a Banana Republic? Now's your chance. Coming in a sturdy box, complete with two manuals, a map and two floppy disks, *Hidden Agenda* sees you having just been swept to power in the pseudo-South American country of Chimerica.

From a group of nine politicians, three from each party, you have to pick your ministers. Each character comes with their own biography, and their own definite ideas on how the country should be run.

You begin the game with a three party coalition and a mandate for a three year term in office. During this time you will receive conflicting advice from your ministers and outside agencies as well as the ordinary people of your troubled country. Throughout your term you will receive countless complaints, advice from everyone who all know better than you, you will be cajoled, threatened, persuaded and will probably go quite mad with the complicated, confusing and frustrating job of being El Presidente. If things get too bad you can easily be subject to a coup, assassination, etc.

Hidden Agenda really is an excellent game, for pure originality if nothing else. The real trick is trying to keep the delicate balance. It is impossible to please everyone all of the time and you will always have someone on your back. The trouble I had getting rid of the Death Squads, for example. It's not as easy as you might think!

STRATEGY 85%

PC £27.50 import

2400 AD

Origin

2400 AD is an *Ultima*-type game. Interaction is quite basic but essential to completing the game. You will be able to roam the city as well as delve in the underground which is a complex tunnel system set up by the rebels.

During the game you will be arrested if you don't check in after a set amount of moves. A bit silly this as you are always put in the same cell, with the same secret panel to help you escape. Then you are off on your merry way again. The items confiscated from you during your arrest can be easily picked up from the storage room where they are always placed. Seems like a waste of time to me.

2400 AD is a big disappointment. The game feels like one of the early *Ultimas* giving little challenge with no real puzzles to think over. The plot has promise but the whole system needs a drastic re-write before it can be deemed worthy of sale.

RPG 53%

PC, C64

THE MAGIC CANDLE

Mindcraft/MicroProse

Ah, now where would we be without our regular TGM exclusive, eh? This month I can reveal that MicroProse have laid their hands on a rather nifty RPG from American impresarios Mindcraft. *The Magic Candle* takes an *Ultima* viewpoint on the world of Deruvia. The flame of the magic candle holds captive the evil Dreax. Disaster seems inevitable now as the guardians of the candle have disappeared and the candle is burning down. When it is extinguished Dreax will take no prisoners. Your team has to find a way to stop this calamity.

I like *The Magic Candle*. Why? Because it implements quite a few of those design philosophies that I hold dear to my roleplaying heart. The boring method of hack 'n' slash is kept down to a bare minimum as the game concentrates upon puzzles, plot and roleplaying, which is what the RPGs are all about, after all. Monster generation is realistic. You'll find a limit to the numbers of monsters. They are only re-generated when a 'new patrol' enters the area — about every three game months. However, dungeons have a fixed number of monsters. Once they're dead there's no more. Characters are pre-generated, each one has a unique character instead of being a bunch of numbers which you've created and named Fred, or something.

Character teams don't walk around everywhere like a bunch of hooligans. They have the ability to be split into many sections. While in a town you can have two of your team training, others earning a wage working for jewellers, in taverns, etc. The list goes on, magic users can wield swords and wear armour.

For goodness sake why hasn't this been done before? Okay, magic users may not be too skillful at swordsmanship, they'll probably miss more times than they hit. But if they want to carry a sword and wear armour — let them! Weapons and armour are subject to wear and tear, combat has a good tactical edge on it with intelligent characters. This means that a bunch of thick orcs will attack willy-nilly. However, face a bunch of intelligent magic users and they'll use effective strategies. Maybe they'll gang up on your strongest character, head for any wounded characters, etc.

There is a good use of stats, and magic can only be learnt from books and the included spells only learnt from uninterrupted periods of concentration. Once a spell has been cast it has to be re-learnt. Good, this prevents the magic users dominating the game. One or two of these features (there are many more that I've not had a chance to mention) may have been seen in other games but you won't have seen them all in one release, and certainly not as well integrated.

The Magic Candle is not perfect, combat can drag on sometimes. Even so, the high standard of the design has won through. Probably the highlight to *Candle* is the end sequence which is one of, if not the, most satisfying end-games seen in any RPG so far. This is one of the few commercial RPGs on the market which has been produced by games players for games players, without the disastrous intervention of the pin-stripe brigade. I reckon Mindcraft (and MicroProse) have got a winner on their hands. *The Magic Candle* is a quality RPG. I can't wait for the sequel.

RPG 90%

GOLDEN SCROLL



READER CLASSIFIEDS

WANTED

PC Engine games wanted. Will pay up to £15. Send lists to S. Billing, 206 Ash Grove, Hounslow, Middx. TW5 9DT or ring 01 569 4132 between 6.30pm and 10.00pm.

Sega games wanted will pay £10 for required - PC Engine games wanted will pay £15 for required. Must be in good condition. Phone 01 874 5408.

Sega games wanted, buy or swap. Also, Atari VCS/2600 console and games wanted. Tel: (031) 332 4618 (after 6pm). Dave McDougall, 20 Buckingham Terrace, Edinburgh EH4 3AD.

Mind Power Designs want the best artists musicians coder(s) to join us to achieve new and original ideas! Amiga dedicated only send some of your latest work now!! The best only need apply! No swapping!! Anybody local! T. Clarke, 58 Charlotte Road, Wallasey, Merseyside L44 0DW.

FOR SALE

PC Engine (PAL) for sale, boxed, and ten games like Side Arms, Gunhed, Tiger Heli, Bloody Wolf, Ordyne, P47. Cost £500, P&P included sell for £230. Write to:- Rich, 4B Currents Lane, Harwich, Essex CO12 3DE.

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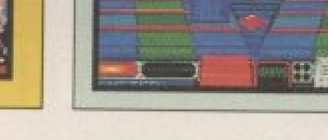
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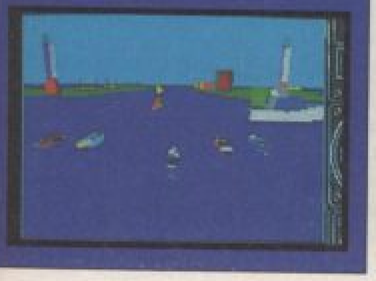


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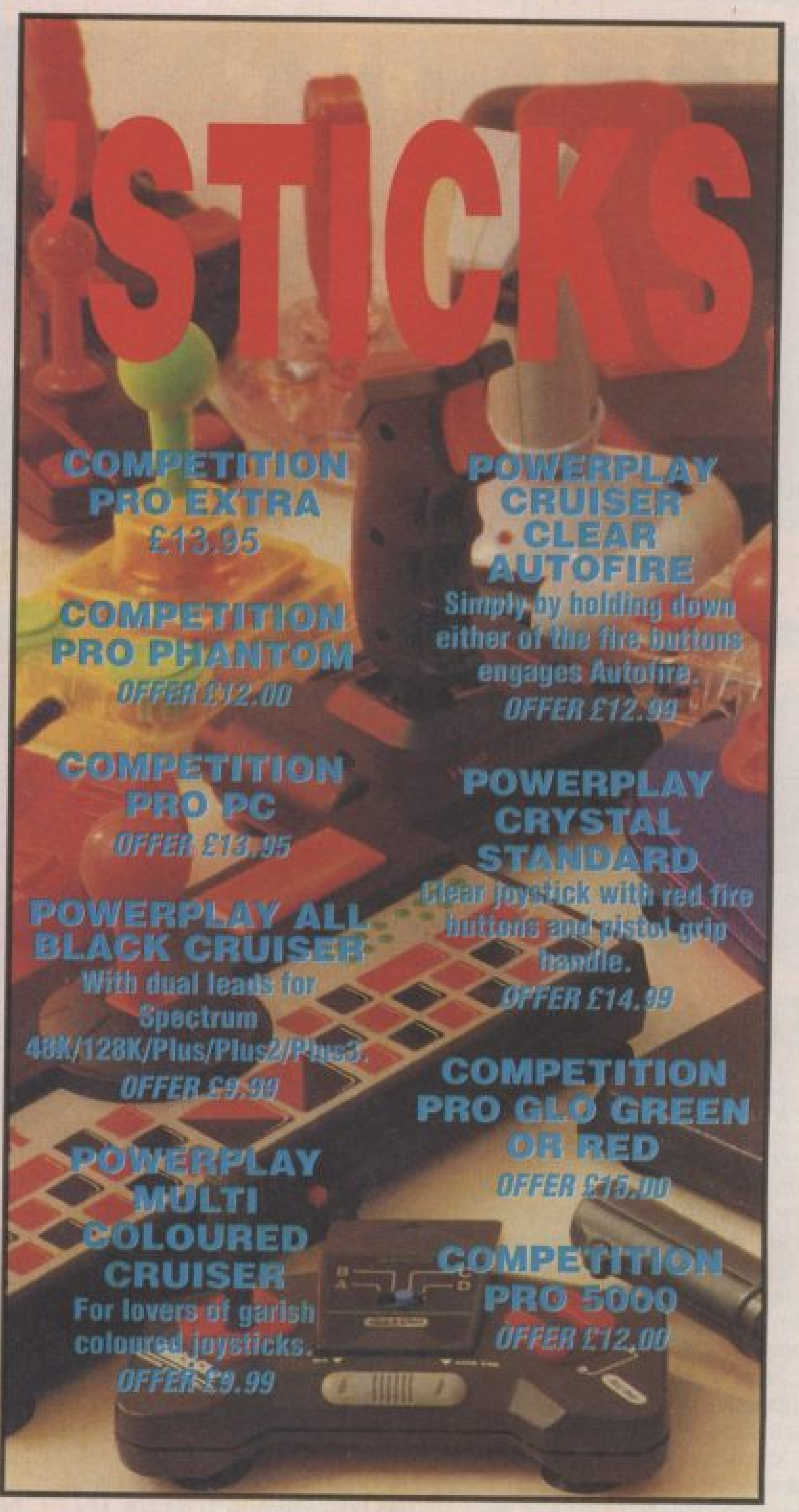
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LETTUCE PAGE

It's spring! Hurrah! Time to get out in the garden and tend everyone's favourite vegetable — the lettuce. And back here at the office we're tending our lettuce — reader's lettuce! Haw, haw! 'Tis indeed a time to be jolly — and to jolly yourself up why not drop us a line on anything computer-wise that you want to shout about, grumble at, praise or just comment on. If you're picked as the lucky winner you'll get £50 worth of software! The address is: NEWSFIELD, TGM LETTUCE, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1JW.

Test out the mess

Dear sir
I am writing to inform you of the poor software testing amongst recent games manufacturers.

I paid £29.95 for *Fighter Bomber* and found these results. After about four missions, I discovered that the enemy fighters, which are more aggressive on the higher levels, were absolutely mad, insisting on kamikaze kills if they could not shoot me down. In my mind, this is absolutely unrealistic as no combat pilot (that I know of!) is trained to use this method. It is not simply a case of accidental collision — this is deliberate flying straight up my jet's tailpipe. I have written to Activision regarding this matter and am still waiting for an answer.
Mark Williams, Ivybridge.

We haven't actually noticed this bug — though enemy fighters often fly incredibly close, giving only a split second for you to shoot them down with your cannon. It could be at this point that you're colliding.

Gook: a gaff?

Dear sir
I am writing about your review of *The Lost Patrol* in TGM028. My specific complaint is the use of the word 'gook' by Mark Caswell. If the game was about South African police attacking black people in the townships you would not use the term nigger, or would you? Both are equally derogatory. I'm sure games such as this have great value in teaching the horrors of war, but when you reduce it to killing gooks instead of the real name for these people (ie: Vietnamese) all good intentions are lost and it becomes another Rambo. I hope you will print some kind of apology/explanation. There are many Vietnamese in this country (remember the boat people) and I'm sure they would take exception to being referred to as gooks.
Andrew Shenton, Cottingham.

Charlies or gooks were nicknames given to Vietnamese during the war — same as the Germans were given the nickname Jerries in World War II. Considering The Lost Patrol *is set in the Vietnam war, when the Vietnamese were the enemy of the US Army, we see no problem referring to them in such a way. However, if the remark had been made to current-day Vietnamese you would have a case.*

Going green

Dear TGM
There's not much greenery in the computer industry, is there? I mean the environmental issues which are sweeping the country — are software houses and publications doing anything to support them? Recycled paper for magazines, or packaging for games maybe a start. Any comments?
Matthew Harness, Liverpool.

As much as TGM would love to be 100% environmentally-friendly, the cost of recycled paper is still prohibitive (and think of the chemicals that would be needed to cleanse paper to our requirements). And besides, TGM isn't printed on paper from trees in the rain forests but from quick-growing trees in Finland, and currently more trees are being replaced and grown than are required for paper. But, in a concerted effort to be slightly greener, the Readerpage is now Lettuce — lettuce! Geddit? Letters? Never mind... just think green.

Mega driven round the bend

Dear TGM
Recently I purchased a Sega Mega Drive from Mention Technical Services for 200 quid. Probably the main reason I brought the Mega Drive from Mention was the claim made in their advert. It claimed that their Mega Drive was the only one in Europe which would be compatible with future UK games. Then, whilst reading last month's TGM, I discover that 'none of the Virgin Mastertronic distributed games will run on imported machines as they're being reconfigured for the UK'. A lie, I thought, a mistake, my Sega's compatible with all 16-bit systems on sale now and in the future, or so the advert claimed. But then another magazine backed up the claim with an official statement from Virgin Mastertronic.

Surely the advertising should not have been allowed and companies should have to prove their claims. What do you think?
Stephan Borson, Manchester.

It's difficult to judge at the moment, as we haven't seen any of Virgin Mastertronic's UK carts to test on grey-imported Mega Drives. However, if you find out Virgin Mastertronic distributed games really don't work we see no reason why Mention should not offer you a refund as you bought your Mega Drive on the basis of all UK games being compatible.

Full o' fun

Dear TGM
What's been your most enjoyable game? I know mine, it was *Atic Atac* on the Spectrum. Why? Well, back in the good old days when computers were a New Thing to the home user, nothing quite like them had been seen before. Games such as *Atic Atac, Manic Miner* and *Jet-Pac* amazed everybody who saw them. They were instantly addictive and totally playable. Nowadays, computers are no longer new to us. Once the user came to grips with the 8-bit micros he/she wanted bigger and better — enter the 16-bit machines.

The point I'm trying to make is that something new always draws our attention. However, through time, people start to look elsewhere for their kicks. I personally have owned a Spectrum and C64, and presently own an Amiga. Whilst owning a Spectrum I would play virtually any game, on the C64

STAR LETTER Branson's pickle

Dear sir
After reading in your magazine about Virgin Mastertronic plans to make the UK-based games (when they arrive) incompatible with the imported machines, and thus isolate the kids who own these machines, I felt compelled to put printer to paper in the form of an open letter to Mr R Branson.
Chris Norris, Manchester.

Dear Mr Branson
I read in this month's The Games Machine of your deplorable plans to make the UK Mega Drive games incompatible with imported Mega Drives!

Do you realise that by taking these steps you will isolate the children (they are the ones who own these things!) who already have a Japanese version, or even American Genesis system.

These imported systems were not bought to deprive you of your livelihood, they were bought because we became fed up of waiting for Sega or Virgin Mastertronic to start importing them!

Technology is moving so fast that this type of electronic gadgetry is usually superseded one or two years after the launch, so why should people wait for Virgin Mastertronic to get off their bums?

You may succeed in splitting the UK user base into two camps, imported and Virgin Mastertronic, but you will be cutting off your nose to spite your face because the kids with imported units would probably switch onto your UK games given the chance! Thus increasing the company's turnover and profits.

Wait a minute, though. On second thoughts, buying your games could be a mistake! I see that Virgin Mastertronic have recently released *Golden Axe* on the 8-bit Sega at £29.95. I bought the 16-bit Mega Drive version from Hong Kong for less than that. Games will always be available from Japan via Hong Kong long before you release them and they will be cheaper too!

My Japanese Mega Drive was bought for me by a relative from a company called Westlake of Hong Kong and is great: internally modulated, can be used via Scart, and DOES NOT OVERHEAT! Picture quality is perfect. I had to replace the exterior power pack that was sent because they use 200 volts over there, but otherwise it's spot on! And as for your worry about safety, this has GOT to be a red herring as far as the Mega Drive is concerned.

I believe your tactics are also used when selling insurance. It is called 'backing up the hearse so that they can smell the flowers' — frightening people into a course of action that suits the salesperson.

My Sega Mega Drive cost £99.95 plus p&p, with an extra £23 duty. Yes, £99.95! HOW MUCH WILL YOUR SEGA MEGA DRIVE COST...?
Christopher Norris.

Mr Branson, we await your reply! (Kerthunk!) Berlimey! Here it is now — except it's from Nick Alexander who's the Managing Director of Virgin Mastertronic...

We are Sega's distributors in the UK. We do not manufacture either hardware or software nor control the design, and it is Sega rather than us who are responsible for determining the prices that we are able to sell at.

As you may know, it has been normal practice for consumer electronic companies to introduce new products to the Japanese market first, followed by the USA and then Europe. It has also been common practice for consumer electronic equipment to be priced lower in Japan and the USA than in Europe. The logic for this is not obvious to us as disposable incomes are lower in Europe than in either the USA or Japan. We have discussed this point with Sega on many occasions but they tell us that EEC countries require much higher component and safety specifications than the other countries and that this pushes up their production costs, hence the higher retail prices.

The result of all this has been that various companies have started to make significant businesses out of importing equipment from the Far East and converting it for the European TV systems.

This creates problems for us because we cannot guarantee the hardware or vouch for its safety, nor can we deal with the problems of incompatibility caused by different hardware specifications in the different territories. But, as the official distributor, we do of course get all the complaints from any purchasers of the grey-imported machines.

We placed the advertisement in the press in order to try to explain this situation to the public and indeed believe we would have been negligent not to have done so.

We have recently made representations to Sega on the compatibility issue to see if it can be resolved satisfactorily.

Finally, the timing of the launch of the 'official' Mega Drive is again determined by Sega rather than ourselves. We, in fact, wanted to release the Mega Drive in September 1989 but Sega will only start manufacturing European versions this summer, in time for a September 1990 launch.

We understand your frustration and share some of it. We will be passing your letter to Sega so that they too can understand the real world problems that are created by some of the manufacturing policies that they and other Far Eastern companies try to implement in Europe.
Nick Alexander, Managing Director, Virgin Mastertronic.

my choice narrowed down, and with the Amiga I only really play two types of games — puzzle-solving and roleplaying. Nowadays, shoot-'em-ups, beat-'em-ups and the like simply do not turn me on. Many, many people I know also share the same viewpoint.

To conclude, I think that during the following years, shoot-'em-ups etc will become more unpopular, games which do well will be the puzzle-solving, strategy and RPG types (games requiring a little thinking power have always done well). I feel that games which will do particularly well will be the most original — a good starter for us here is *Populous*. Only time will tell whether my predictions come true.
Denis Cowie, Cleethorpes.

Atic Atac *was a damn fine game. An Amiga conversion was anticipated from Krisalis, but sadly the project has been cancelled. Playability is losing out slightly to the graphics and sound of the 16-bits, but ever so often a game does come along to charge up your thrill power — like* Kick Off *and* E-Motion *last issue... just a couple of the games no-one can put down!*

Best for games?

Dear TGM
There is one very important question these days that never really gets answered. Are consoles like the PC Engine or Mega Drive better for games than 16-bit micros? This is something that everybody asks but nobody seems able to answer satisfactorily.
Ian Gilroy, Fareham.

The situation's this. With consoles you've only got eight directional movement and a couple of fire buttons — with 16-bit machines you've got a whole keyboard. So if you're into adventures or RPGs, or any game with some depth in it, the 16-bits are better suited. On the basic shoot-'em-up/platform game level they're about equal. So for the time being a 16-bit should serve you better (there's more UK software support for them than consoles) — though it's always worth keeping a close eye on the console scene.

LETTUCE OF THE MONTH
with Ernest K Periwinkle

MAY: TOM THUMB LETTUCE

Greetings, allotment lovers. Yer Tom Thumb is a beautiful lettuce — a jot smaller than yer average lettuce — but has small solid heads and just a few outer leaves. An' they 'ave a wonderful taste to 'em, sweet it is and very crispy too! Harvest 'em any time from May to October.

You can plant Tom Thumbs outdoors (from March to October) in thin, moist soil — with a space of 22cms between each and about 1cm deep. Indoors, under glass (from February to March) with the same sowing instructions as outdoors.
Cheery bye!

The Games machine

NEXT MONTH

DON'T MISS THE BOAT, THE JUNE ISSUE OF TGM SETS SAIL FROM ALL QUALITY NEWSAGENTS FROM THE END OF MAY

RARE ENCOUNTERS

What have the Rare/Ultimate boys been playing at? We attempt to break down the barriers of their secret stronghold and reveal all!

CAN THEY PAINT, OR WHAT?

We give Bob Wakelin, Roger Dean, Oli Frey and other illustrators a crayon and see what happens. Brigitte Van Reuben rasps at the results.

VIDEOPHONE FUN!

It's the televisual communication sensation that's sweeping the nation - TGM gets switched on.

BEDROOM OF THE FUTURE

Will those Bros posters still be adorning your walls in 2020 AD? Probably not. Never mind, there's a heap of electronic gadgetry to fill the space.

GAME FOR A LARF?

Who puts the game in the Game Boy? TGM travels the world (well, South London actually) and finds out that a game boy in the hand is worth two in the bush!

■ PLUS! ■

E-Motion survival guide ■ More Japanese japes ■ Action-packed arcade games ■ And loads and loads of game reviews!

PLUS ANOTHER POWER-PACKED PLAYING TIPS BOOKLET!

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UNCLE MEL'S TRIVIA QUIZ

1) Micronesia is a real country. True or false?
2) What was unusual about the boss of *Xenon Technologies*, the recently bankrupt software mail order empire?
3) Spot the odd one out: Superman, Captain America, Spider-Man, Batman.
4) How much faster is the Bell Laboratories Laser Processor than the fastest silicon processor?
5) Ocean may have just released *Ivanhoe*, but who created him and when?
6) Why did the computer boffin cross the road?
7) What's the only thing wrong with the one trillion operations per second chip from FM Towns producer, Fujitsu?
8) Who complained about Cheetah's joystick adverts: a) Lindsey Buckingham, b) Bucks Fizz, c) Buckingham Palace?
9) What surprise free gift did 2,000 subscribers to the second issue of *Mac-Publishing* receive?
10) Gonzo Games is the latest software house to bid for the Loonies of the Year Award. But on which TV programme did Gonzo originally appear?
11) What's the difference between the new C15 Sinclair electric car and a C15 audio cassette?
12) 100 years ago, Edison and Eastman perfected frame-by-frame moving images. What have Fujix, NEC and Cannon just put on the market?
13) Who is Cassandra Peterson better known as?
14) Name the computers linked with Sir Issac Newton, a naked Greek and E´mc2.
15) What record did Channel Four's Land of the Giants break when it was first produced for television?
16) Which software houses can be found in these tramps: Ol' Slag McCretins, Don D Rubber, A Vermin?
17) What do you call a word processor with infinitely variable type fonts and complete portability?
18) In which Common Market capital is copy-while-you-wait piracy available from most high street software stores?
19) Named the armour-plated hero of Alternative's latest licence.

ANSWERS

1) **True, turn to section three of your phone directory for details (charge band G).**
2) **Stephen Lee is only 17, legally underage to sign a contract!**
3) **Spider-Man. He doesn't wear his underpants on the outside of his tights.**
4) **One thousand times.**
5) **Sir Walter Scott, 1820.**
6) **He got superglued to the chicken.**
7) **It overheats in, er, one second.**
8) **c) Buckingham Place, they said it slagged off the Royals!**
9) **A virus off the cover disk.**
10) **The Muppet Show.**
11) **The cassette is of some practical use.**
12) **Still video!**
13) **Elvira, Mistress of the Dark.**
14) **Apple, Archimedes, Einstein.**
15) **Cost! At £250,000 an episode, it was the most expensive TV series ever.**
16) **Magnetic Scrolls, Broderbund, Minerva.**
17) **A pencil.**
18) **Athens. Have they lost their marbles!?**
19) **Thomas the Tank Engine.**

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